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ABSTRACT

"Fostering the School Age Child" is a manual for use in training families providing service to children in foster care. Including instructor's materials and participants' course content, this instructor's manual is divided into eight lessons. Separate instructional sessions focus on development and behavior; building discipline and teaching responsibility; working with the school; separation trauma; the role of the natural family in building self esteem; social relationships; self esteem in home and community; and living with the school age child. Appended materials provide examples of forms potentially helpful to foster parents and discuss the development of the school age child; treating children as children; natural and logical consequences; rewards; special school services for children; self concept; community services available to foster parents; and enuresis. Lists of suggested readings for foster parents and instructors are included. (RH)

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— INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL —

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Fostering the School Age Child

prepared for the FOSTER PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM
Institute for the Study of Children and Families
Eastern Michigan University

by JAMES C. PIERS, M.S.W.

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FOSTERING THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD...

prepared for the

FOSTER PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

by

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INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

PS 015092

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Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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Fostering the School Age Child was developed by James C. Piers as an eight-week course to use with foster parents for the Foster Parent Education Program at Eastern Michigan University. This program was developed with federal demonstration funds from the Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems, NIMH, HEW (5T21 MH 13742).

The goals of the Foster Parent Education Program are to: 1) develop a model for foster parent training that can be used on a statewide basis with foster parents working for a variety of agencies, and 2) develop curriculum and materials for a variety of classes that will upgrade the services foster parents are able to provide for the children in their homes.

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INSTRUCTOR'S PREFACE

Fostering the School Age Child is a manual to be used in training families who provide service to children in foster care. The participant's manual is divided into eight sessions. The introductory section of the instructor's manual was prepared by the project staff at Eastern Michigan University and makes suggestions on physical facilities, room arrangements, and other practical problems that may concern the instructor. The specific instructions for each of the eight sessions precede the content for that session. Additional materials, including an instructor's bibliography, follow the last class material.

In order to facilitate the instructor's use of the manual, instructions to the instructor are on colored paper. The white pages are copies of the pages found in the participant manual. Instructor's material on these pages is in red ink. You will note such pages have two different page numbers, one designating sequence in the participants manual and one designating sequence in the instructor's manual.

This workbook has been developed to assist instructors in presenting course content to foster parents. It has been used by several different instructors with different groups of foster parents. These foster parents vary in age, type of community in which they live and educational attainment. The workbook provides a framework to be developed by the instructor in line with the needs, concerns, and abilities of a particular class. The following comments are in reaction to the instructors' comments and may be useful in helping new instructors in planning their presentation.

If the workbook is used, the instructor may want to consider the two most common complaints we have received. "There is not enough material" and "There is too much material." Both of these comments are justified depending on the composition of the class and the way in which the manual is used. The workbook is intended to be only one of the instructor's tools. It was designed so foster parents would have a permanent record of the material discussed in class and also so they could personalize the material, making it meaningful in terms of the children in their home and the agency with which they work.

Instructors who concentrate on helping participants fill in all of the appropriate blank spaces may find they are still confused at the end of the class and do not understand the material fully. The format of the class should be structured so the participants can discuss what each idea or term means with opportunities to provide one another with concrete examples. Always the questions, "What does this mean for the children in my home?" and "What does this imply about my responsibility as a foster parent?" and "What does this imply about my responsibility as a foster parent?" should be answered. The instructor will find further suggestions on activities designed to help participants learn and apply course material in the Seventeen Course Outlines.*

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*Ryan, Patricia, et al. Seventeen Course Outlines, Eastern Michigan University, 1978.

If the class seems to master the material quickly and with ease, the instructor may want to invite speakers from the community to address the class and provide additional material. Few communities have sufficient resources to provide adequate services to needy families. Some classes may want to assess the areas of most need and decide ways in which they can advocate for such changes.

The instructor must always remember the material presented to the class is not only intended to increase their understanding of the growth and development of school aged children. The class will have truly met the needs of foster parents only when they are able to utilize the material to increase the amount and kind of services they can provide for children. In order for the material to be used as the basis for behavioral change, it will be necessary to allow plenty of time for repetition and utilization of concrete examples.

Instructors who find there is too much material are probably using these techniques. They may find it necessary to select the material which is of most interest or concern to their particular class and to briefly summarize the other material without spending much time on it. If the participants in the class have different concerns, the instructor may find it useful to divide the class into small groups and let each group concentrate on a particular problem. The small groups can report their findings or discussion to the whole class during the last hour.

Both concerns of too much and too little material probably arise out of heavy dependence on the workbook to provide class format. Certainly many participants will pressure the instructor to give them the answers. Those who do not get most of the answers filled in will feel cheated. In order to make sure participants do not rush the instructor through the material to "get the answers" and to make sure those who are not used to taking notes are assisted in getting the material written down, the instructor may find it helpful to request participants not to take notes until a section is finished. Then the whole class can go back and fill in the material they have found important. This procedure not only assures that each foster parent has a complete manual at the end of the course, but serves as a nice review for each section.

The most important resource in any learning situation is the instructor. All other materials and resources are useful to the extent the instructor is able to utilize them effectively. The following material is offered as one tool for the foster parent instructor's kit. Although we hope it will be useful, we would be disappointed to find instructors were relying on the manual to replace their own knowledge, techniques and assessment of class needs. Feel free to use the material selectively, in the order most appropriate to your teaching style and the needs of your class.

PARTICIPANT MANUAL PREFACE

Foster parents who use this manual will have a wide range of skills and experiences in fostering. Some foster parents will be relatively new, others may have worked in this capacity for twenty or thirty years. Some foster parents may work with children of all ages, while others may specialize in working with children of a certain age range. This workbook, as with all the Foster Parent Training Project workbook series, is designed to draw on the strengths and experiences of foster parents, working together in a group to share and enhance their knowledge of the children they serve.

Children in foster care, like all children, move through stages of development and master the tasks of development at their own individual pace. They need to develop self-esteem and a sense of identity. Some children in foster care may develop at a slightly slower place due to circumstances of their earlier lives and the impact of separation. The questions of self-esteem and identity may be more problematic for such children due to divided loyalties between natural and foster families. The purpose of this workbook is to focus primarily on the school-age development of children in foster care, and the roles of foster parents in partnership with the agency to ensure the healthy growth of the child.

Many foster parents are concerned about the behavior of their foster children. Does a specific behavior indicate that the child has a slight developmental lag and will soon be growing to a new stage of development? Is it fairly typical for a child to react in this way to separation? Is it a sign that the child needs more intensive help in handling this stage of development, or in resolving the conflicts of separation? Is the behavior an unspoken cry for help? This class may raise more questions than it answers for some foster parents. Through class discussions foster parents can sort out these issues, and begin to decide when it is necessary or advisable to call upon the caseworker, school personnel or therapists for expert guidance in handling the unique situation of each individual child.

Foster parents make a significant difference in the life of a child. They can comfort fears and worries, help develop more positive behaviors, and build a sense of self-worth for the child. By understanding a child's feelings about his natural family, they can help the child feel good about him/herself, reduce feelings of conflict, and increase a constructive sense of self and a positive identity.

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INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION*

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES

Fostering the School Age Child is one of a series of manuals developed for the Foster Parent Education Program at Eastern Michigan University. The Manual is divided into eight sessions and has been used effectively at weekly meetings of two and a half hours duration.

This manual helps foster parents ask and answer some basic questions:

1) How do school age children grow and develop?
2) What can we do to understand the particular problems of school age children in our care?
3) How can we insure the maximum growth and development of school age children?
4) How can we handle the behavior problems typical of this age?
5) How can we deal effectively with the school?
6) How can we help children move into the larger community and participate in community activities?
7) What community resources are available to school age children and their families?

The following introductory material provides a general framework to use with all of the modules. It is designed to provide the instructor with an understanding of the classroom dynamics the project staff has found successful in working with foster parents. Participants have had varying educational backgrounds, serve many different kinds of children, and work with all types of agencies. Although these procedures should constitute a helpful guide for the instructor, the greatest contribution of any teacher is his or her ability to evaluate the students and bring them what they most need. It is the instructor's creative use of his materials, his ability to use the strengths of his class, and his warm support of each student's struggle to grow that are most effective in determining what is learned. Thus, we see these materials as the basis from which the instructor starts, and to which he adds his own ideas, skills, and knowledge to meet the unique needs of his class.

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*Prepared for Instructors and Instructors' Manuals by the Eastern Michigan University Foster Parent Training Project.

TEACHING ADULTS

Although there are many common elements in the teacher's role regardless of the subject matter or the type of student, teaching adults outside of the traditional classroom or university setting is different. Typically, the adult student is in the classroom because he has a certain question that he hopes the class will help answer. His educational experience may be limited and sometimes he has had unpleasant classroom experiences. As a competent person used to making his own decisions and functioning well in his world, he may resent the implied subordination in the student's role.

An effective teacher of adults reassures the students that he recognizes and appreciates their competency. He gives them support for seeking help through attending classes. In addition, he emphasizes that learning can be fun and enjoying oneself in class may be the most effective way of learning. The student need not suffer to learn. Although new ideas and ways of doing things may sometimes make a student uncomfortable, the support of the instructor and his classmates aids him in his struggle for growth.

Busy adults are not in the classroom for the sheer joy of learning. They have taken the time to participate because they have specific problems. They typically want immediate answers and are not interested in "theory." The instructor of adults will find that he is usually most effective by starting with specific questions that his class brings. He uses these questions and their solutions to help the class build a more general framework rather than teaching them the general rules and hoping that they can deduce answers to their questions.

Unfortunately, many adults are skeptical of the value of "book" knowledge. They are accustomed to experiential learning and continuously question the credibility of material, especially if it appears to be so abstract as to be inapplicable to their daily lives. In teaching foster parents, the instructor's greatest resource is the foster parents in his class. Collectively, they have had tremendous experience in working with foster children and solving problems. Whenever possible, the instructor should encourage the class members to teach each other.

Typically, a class discussion starts with a foster parent describing a problematic situation. As this point, the instructor may reformulate the issues in line with the topics of the class. The other participants then offer solutions - often through describing similar situations they have encountered. If the similarities are not obvious, the instructor may wish to point them out to the class.

The various ways of dealing with the problem can then be evaluated. In most cases, some solutions will be eliminated as inappropriate, unfeasible, or damaging to the child, but the class will be left with two or three alternatives. Participants should be reminded that there is seldom one right way of parenting and encouraged to try the solution that is best suited to their style or with which they feel the most comfortable.

This process maximizes the participation of each student, assures the relevancy of the discussion to the immediate needs of the participants, and reassures them of their competency and ability to deal with various situations. It has its dangers, especially in dealing with emotionally laden issues. There is always a tendency for the class to use the time available to ventilate their feelings without constructively addressing the problem. The instructor must tolerate some airing of feelings, but strive to refocus the issues. If participants are continuously cut off, they will soon feel they should not contribute. Also, some participants will tend to ramble but eventually make a contribution. A tolerant and supportive instructor who guides the discussion and then summarizes the salient points assures that each person is receiving what he most needs.

Adult participants, like all students, often need to hear new material several times before accepting and incorporating it. We all need to hear the same thing said many times in many ways. The instructor need not fear repetition. Not only is it necessary for initial learning, but once something has been learned we usually find that each time we come back to it we discover new facets and new areas to which we can apply it. The organization of course content into a number of important points underscores commitment to learning through repetition. Typically, each point will surface or resurface thematically through the weeks of class discussion.

Teaching through group discussion is probably the hardest way to teach, but when successful, is the most rewarding in that the students not only learn more but learn in a way that is emotionally satisfying. They can use the material to effectively alter their lives. However, the good group leader does not simply rely on his students to contribute and hope for the best. He carefully prepares the ways in which he will be able to elicit the most meaningful contribution but is willing to alter his plans if a more fruitful approach emerges from group discussion. This manual supplies a structure for class discussion. The sensitive instructor will guide class discussion until participants are comfortable in completing the answers. Some of the ways the instructor can encourage meaningful group participation and techniques that have been successfully used with foster parents are discussed below.

THE PHYSICAL SETTING

Classrooms should be selected to comfortably hold twenty to twenty-five participants. In order to assure maximum participation, seats should be arranged either around one large table or in a circle unless special arrangements are suggested for a particular session. The instructor should be seated so that he is one of the participants. If there are two instructors, or if a special resource person is present, they should sit on opposite sides of the circle. Participants should be encouraged to address their remarks to the group rather than to the instructor.

If at all possible, there should be coffee available. If the site does not have coffee, one of the first tasks of the groups might be to decide if they would like to have coffee and how they should divide the responsibility for buying and preparing it. Some foster parent groups have established norms of bringing and sharing food, ranging from cookies to elaborate meals. If foster parents wish to bring food this can be a pleasant and acceptable manifestation of good feeling. However, refreshments are in no way a requirement and instructors should be careful to see that no foster parents feel pressured to contribute.

Smoking can be a problem. Unfortunately, smokers are most comfortable when allowed to indulge their habit but may seriously discomfort non-smokers in the group. The best solution is a well-ventilated room with smokers in one half of the circle and non-smokers in the other. If smoking is not allowed in the classroom, there should be a break.

If the participants are encouraged to get up to get coffee, leave the room when they like, and are allowed to smoke, it is not always necessary to have a break in a two-to-three hour session. Although the break gives people an opportunity to stretch and move about, it may be difficult to continue the discussion. This can be useful to the instructor if the class has lost the point or is rambling. After the break he can refocus class attention on the crucial issues or begin a new activity.

Overall, the instructor should do everything possible to assure that participants are comfortable. This includes being comfortable with each other. Providing each person with a name tag and involving them in the group discussion as early as possible serves to increase trainee comfort with one another.

ESTABLISHING GOOD PROCEDURES

The first class meeting is the crucial time for establishing the right atmosphere for optimal learning and establishing good procedure. It is very important that each and every person be made to feel comfortable and encouraged to participate. Since the first night of classes often requires some registration or people have difficulty in finding the building or parking, class may start a little late. The instructor should encourage everyone to arrive a little early so that they can start promptly in the future. It is sometimes helpful to add that people who are inadvertently delayed should come anyway and not miss the class.

The instructor's opening remarks should include the following points:

1. We are all here to learn because we want to help foster children, especially those in our own homes. A statement about the goals of the course is appropriate here.

2. Although we have an important and serious task, the process of learning can be fun. It need not be unpleasant to do us any good.

3. Learning to parent is not as simple as learning to sew or put a radio together. There are many good ways to parent and nobody has all the answers.

4. You as a class already have had a great deal of experience in parenting, most of it successful. It is important that we all share our experiences with each other.

If the instructor can honestly say that he hopes to learn as much from the class as they do from him, he should add this.

Unfolding: As soon as possible, the instructor will want to get each person to participate. The suggested technique for doing this is to have each member of the class introduce himself and describe his background. A few people object to this procedure, feeling it is a waste of time, so it is important to let the class know why they are going through this exercise. The instructor should point out:

1. Through the process of sharing information about ourselves we begin participating in the class.
2. As we listen to others, we find that we usually have something in common with everyone else and often a lot more than we had supposed.
3. The process of sharing helps to begin to focus on ourselves and experiences.
4. No one need tell anything that would make them feel uncomfortable or which he is reluctant to share with the group.
5. Each person should take not more than three to five minutes.

The instructor then lists the things that he hopes each will cover and starts the process by describing himself. The instructor's own unfolding always sets the tone and establishes a model for the foster parents' participation. If the instructor omits a point, others usually skip it; if the instructor adds a point, others often add it too. The list should include name, age, place of birth, where you went to school, where you work, how you decided to become involved with foster children, and present interests. Most instructors find it very useful to add one last topic that focuses the foster parents into a particular aspect of the course. See the specific suggestions included in the manual.

Selecting out the topics to be described by the participant is the instructor's first opportunity to use his creativity to help them focus on their own feelings about the topics of the course. His ability to respect each person's contribution provides the class with a model for how they will treat each other.

Recall: After everyone has introduced himself, it is useful to go back around the room asking what people recall about each person starting with his name. Many instructors find that both processes take up too much time for the first session. Waiting until the second session for recall not only allows time to introduce some content into the first session but helps people to loosen up and continue to participate at the beginning of the second session.

In order to encourage as much interaction as possible, the instructor may ask if anyone objects to the rest of the class having his name, address and telephone number. A list can be prepared and distributed to the class at the second meeting. This becomes especially useful if an emergency arises and class has to be cancelled or postponed. It also encourages the trainees to talk together outside of class and to collaborate on assignments.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Each instructor develops his own style. This manual has been used by several instructors. Each one used the material in a different way. Good teaching, like good parenting, does not consist of following a rigid set of rules. Rather each teacher develops techniques with which he feels comfortable, evaluating the usefulness of the technique on his ability to use it to stimulate his students to share relevant expreiences around particular issues, evaluate the various alternatives available to them, and plan how to implement one of these in solving problems.

The instructor's main task then is to stimulate participation. However, as the trainees find support from the class for their experiences and feelings they may try to use class time to release many of their feelings. For many trainees this will be the first time they ever felt comfortable talking about their own feelings or ever had such a sympathetic audience.

The instructor can focus participation by:

1. Introducing the topic under discussion for the evening and relating it to previous topics
2. Asking questions that lead the participants to relate their own experiences to the topic to be discussed
3. Summarizing a participant's statements with emphasis on its relevancy for the topic
4. Reminding participants who talk on and on that they were making a specific point
5. If necessary, assuring a participant that although his contribution is interesting, the class has a specific topic they wish to discuss and they must return to that
6. Summarizing, or better yet, asking the class to summarize the way in which the topic for the evening was covered, and
7. Showing how points covered on a particular topic relate back to other topics or how they will be discussed further under a new topic heading.

In addition to group discussion, there are many other techniques that generate interest and increase participation. Most of these will not be new to the instructor but he can think about ways in which they might be used to present or explore particular topics. These techniques are presented in a general form below. Specific ideas are presented at the beginning of individual sessions.

Reading Materials: The manual assumes little outside reading except what is included for participants. There is a list of suggested reading at the end of the manual. Many foster parents have little time or inclination to read, but almost every class has some people who find reading pleasurable. Those who do outside reading should be encouraged to share with the class what they have read and to ask the class to evaluate how useful it might be in working with the children in their homes.

Participants may be asked to read materials to their families and share with the class the reaction of their spouse and child to the reading.

Assignments: As frequently as possible, participants should be given an explicit assignment to complete at home. This need not be lengthy, but may involve some writing or recording. (It is important to remember that some foster parents may have difficulty with reading or writing, and not to set up assignments which would induce failure or frustration due to lack of these skills). It should allow the participants to immediately put to use some of the things that they discussed in the class or prepare them for material that will be introduced next session. Observing a child, use of a new management technique with a child, calling their worker or a community resource for specific information, recording some specific behaviors, are all examples of such assignments. The instructor should assure that each participant receives feedback on all of his assignments, either through discussing it with the whole group, discussing it in a small group, or through receiving written comments from the instructor.

Role Playing: One of the best techniques for helping participants develop new ideas and to see things from a new vantage point is role playing. At the beginning, many participants may feel a little uncomfortable about "play acting" and it is often useful to start with a written script. With more experience, they may be given role assignments and a situation and allowed to spontaneously develop their own lines. The class may be broken into small groups and each group given a different situation to do for the whole class or each group may be given a different role and discuss how one of their members should act out his part. Playing a certain role may trigger fairly intense feelings. Part of the instructor's task is to help the participants articulate and handle the affect engendered by the role play, while constructively using the feelings to build empathy.

Brainstorming: This is a set of techniques used for creative problem solving or generating new ideas. The instructor provides the following ground rules for trainees:

There are no right or wrong answers; any idea, no matter how far fetched, is acceptable.

No verbal or non-verbal approval or disapproval is given for any ideas.

All ideas are visually listed, written on blackboard, newsprint, etc.

No idea is discarded for any reason.

Long pauses or silences are encouraged, as quiet engenders creativity.

A session runs from 20 minutes to half an hour to allow sufficient time.

It is useful to start with a "practice run" if participants are unfamiliar with brainstorming. They can be asked to "brainstorm" or list a number of items in a certain category (pets, colors, fruits, occupations, etc.). After a brief "warm up" of 5 or 10 minutes, using the brainstorming guidelines, participants are then asked to brainstorm the topic question (e.g., new ways of working with natural families.)

Following the brainstorming session participants may then select the most useful ideas generated. They may discuss how they could implement some of these ideas. It may be useful to sort the ideas into related categories and allow for small group discussion.

Games: There are many group games available that aid the participant in gaining a new perspective, finding out how different people are, or beginning to understand how difficult it is to understand even simple communications. Some of these are described in the manuals. They can be used in small groups or for the whole class.

Multi-Media: Movies, tapes, and slide presentations that can stimulate discussion on particular topics are sometimes available. If the instructor has access to a tape recorder or video-taping materials, these can be used successfully in allowing participants to critically observe their role playing or other activities and decide how they might want to change.

Small Groups: Dividing the class into small groups has been discussed above, but is also useful for more intensive discussion around specific topics. These topics will vary, and may be established by a number of criteria, which would include, but not be limited to, age of the foster children, legal status of the foster children, and level of functioning of a child with special needs. For example, in a class on Mental Retardation, small groups might be set up for foster parents of infants, pre-schoolers, school age children or teens, so that participants can relate concepts of emotional development to the specific age groups with which they are dealing. It may also be useful at times for small groups to all focus on the same topics, not for the purpose of dealing with a variety of specialized issues, but rather to afford all participants an opportunity for more intense involvement than is possible in large group discussion.

The instructor should make sure that each group has a specific topic and a clear idea of what they are trying to accomplish. To maintain the group process of the class as a whole and to focus the small group discussion, it is useful to ask each small group (or a designated number) to report back to the class as a whole on the important points of the small group discussion.

Implementation of Techniques: The above techniques are suggestions to increase the usefulness of the manual by maximizing the involvement and participation of the participants. The suggestions, along with the material provided in the manual, should be useful in helping the instructor develop an interesting and useful course. However, each instructor is responsible for evaluating the materials and using them in the way he feels is most beneficial to his class. The decisions he makes about materials and techniques, and his order of presentation should be based on his professional judgement as to the participants' needs and what will be most beneficial in helping them grow and learn. He should consider his own strengths and limitations and select those techniques with which he will be most comfortable, while feeling free to experiment with a variety of suggested techniques to enhance his own skills.

GENERAL THEMES

The materials presented in this manual and other materials have been developed by the staff of the Eastern Project and/or by the instructors teaching for the project. There has been no attempt to incorporate any particular approach to child development or child management. Rather we have selected from many works those ideas and techniques our experience working with foster parents suggests will be most helpful to them. Most instructors will probably be familiar with many of these ideas and will already be using them. Certain themes have emerged from our classes that cut across the lines of specific courses. Some are stressed more heavily in one course than in others. Our experience suggests that, although it is fairly easy to get agreement in these ideas, it is also easy to forget them and lapse into older habits. It is our hope that instructors will reread frequently the following points and attempt to stress them whenever appropriate in class discussion.

How We View the Child: It is important that the foster parent regards each child as a child first and as a foster child second. All children are more alike than different. If the child has a physical, emotional, or mental handicap, he is still a child with all the needs of a child. All children progress through a series of developmental stages with corresponding growth, stress, and challenges. Children in foster care have the same needs and follow the same patterns as other children. The particular traumas a child has experienced or his exceptional characteristics may mean that he will develop at a somewhat different pace than other children. Sometimes behavior typical of a particular stage becomes problematic especially if the child is chronologically older than one for whom this behavior is typical or if the behavior is more frequent or exaggerated than usual. To the extent that foster parents can view a child's behavior as more normal than abnormal even when it is disruptive, they will be more easily able to cope and to help the child move to more appropriate behaviors.

In addition to physical care and emotional support, the major job of the foster parent, indeed any parent, is to assess the child and help him move on to the next appropriate level. It is helpful if foster parents can view the goal of their work with the child not as "improvement" in his behavior but as progress and growth.

The long range goal for any child is to help him develop into, or come as close as possible to behaving as a capable, self-sufficient adult who feels good about himself. The foster parent works with the social worker and other professionals in assessing the child's needs and developing a plan to help the child progress toward independent adulthood.

Examining Our Own Feelings: Foster parents often have had little opportunity or motivation to examine their own feelings and attitudes. To the extent that their caseworker has been able to establish a relationship that allows him to work with them in these areas, stress is usually on their conflicts and problems.

It is more helpful to reassure foster parents their feelings are normal and experienced by most parents. Self-examination helps one to be more aware of one's values, moral codes, and behavioral standards, it does not necessarily mean one should change but allows one to sort out which standards are most important. It often allows one to become more tolerant of people who have different standards.

Many foster parents are concerned that if they are unable to teach the children in their care to behave properly, or stop them from behaving wrongly, they will grow up with serious problems or find themselves in serious trouble. They do not like to admit to themselves their reactions to certain behavior: They find themselves angry. They are embarrassed in front of their friends and neighbors. They are sometimes "turned off." They are afraid they are not coping and fear things will get completely out of control. They tend to blame themselves for the child's behavior. They often think that if only they were better foster parents, if they had done the job well, if they knew more about how to handle children, then these things wouldn't happen. Exploration of these feelings helps participants to discover that they are complicating the problem. The difficulties created by the child's problem are real and some forms of behavior can not be allowed to continue, but as participants come to grips with their own feelings, they are better able to help the child.

As foster parents come to realize that anger, frustration, and embarrassment are normal and that all foster parents, indeed all parents, have these feelings more often than they would like to admit, they can stop blaming themselves. Finally, they begin to realize they are not responsible for most of the problems of the child and the child's behavior does not mean that he does not like them. They are able to look at the success they are having, try to be satisfied that they are doing their best, and then look for alternative ways to handle the behavior.

Communications: Failure to effectively communicate clouds both professional and personal interactions. Failure to say exactly what one means not only conveys the wrong message to the listener but when repeated distorts the speaker's own perception of what he means. Foster parents often find it effective to rethink the messages they are, sometimes inadvertantly, sending the children. Learning to describe behavior rather than personalizing or labeling, and including positives as well as negative points often helps them to be more positive about the child.

There are certain rules that can be emphasized over and over again:

1. Although the child's behavior is disapproved, the child is worthwhile. (I don't like dirty hands, not I don't like you if you are dirty.)

2. Describe the behavior not personal characteristics. (You did not make your bed, not you are a slob.)

3. Be specific. (You took a dime, not you stole.)

4. Differentiate between feelings and behavior. (It is O.K. to be angry but you can't hit your brother.)

5. Try to state alternatives positively. (I like clean rooms, not I don't like dirty rooms.)

6. Try to let the child know what you want as specifically as possible.

7. Whenever possible, provide the child with acceptable alternative behavior rather than simply telling him to stop.

8. Remember the example the parent sets is much more important in shaping behavior than anything the parent says. (If you don't want a child to interrupt you, don't interrupt him.)

9. Try to reassure the child that you believe he is capable of growing, changing, and learning to conrol himself.

Policy: Since agency policy differs from one agency to another, the material in the manual does not discuss specific agency policies. When questions about policy arise in class the instructor can assign one or more participants the task of finding out what a particular agency's policies are. It is part of the foster parent's role responsibilities to know his own agency's policy.

The Foster Parent's Role: There is a growing discussion about the feasibility of redefining the role of the foster parents. Suggestions as to new role models include foster parents being viewed as:

1. Agency employees

2. Volunteer Service Providers

3. Independent Service Providers from whom the agency purchases service.

Although these models differ, there is agreement that the foster parent is the direct service provider to the child, a member of the team, rather than a quasi-client. The foster parent's job includes working with the caseworker, natural parents, if possible, and other professionals to assess and plan for the child. Foster parents are recognized as having special skills and knowledge whose input and participation in decision making is integral in providing good service information on a regular basis and abiding by agency policy. They should expect to receive the information they need to work with the child, be given adequate time to prepare the child for changes, and to be kept informed of any pending changes in the child's situation. The motivations of the foster parents for fostering, their personal feelings, and any problems they may have are irrelevant except when they manifest themselves in behavior that interferes with adequate job performance.

THE INSTRUCTOR'S ROLE IN MODELING TEAM BUILDING

As foster parents change their own role perceptions, and move towards defining themselves as valued members of a child-serving team, the impact of the instructor is a crucial factor in two areas. By affirming and validating the participant's expertise and newly acquired skills, the instructor can model and reinforce the team concept. Equally important, the instructor can impart, by example, many effective techniques of parenting.

The instructor, in most instances, represents "the professional world" to participating foster parents. Those instructors who actually are foster parents are often highly skilled and successful foster parents who have mastered the art of working in a team approach. Those who are professional child welfare workers, clinical psychologists, or special education teachers represent to the participants a part of the professional community with whom foster parents must interact for the good of the child. As they learn to interact with their instructors, they acquire skills which will later be invaluable in contacts with caseworkers, therapists, and teachers of their foster children. Learning to assert themselves, describe behaviors specifically and cooperate with instructors helps the foster parents to practice, in a safe place, behaviors which will later be used in encounters with other professionals. The instructor's respect, cooperation and support of foster parents as team members is instrumental in defining role expectations of trained foster parents, and reinforces the growing self-esteem of participants as valued members of the child serving team.

Similarly, the instructor models many effective techniques of parenting in his interaction with the class. Although teaching is only a quasi-authority position, a certain analogy can be drawn between the process of teaching and the process of parenting. In each situation, there are needs to be assessed and met, stages of development to be defined, and areas of growth to be encouraged. The student (whether in foster parent training or graduate school) looks to an instructor for guidance and support just as a child looks to a parent figure. By being a good "parent" to the class, encouraging growth rather than "obedience", using support rather than criticism, the instructor models the most effective ways of dealing with people, and demonstrates the project philosophy. Feedback from foster parents indicates that when "in a tight spot" they often stop to think what a favorite instructor might do or say in a similar situation.

Thus, while much of the participants' learning results from sharing of experience in group discussion and acquiring content material, the instructor should not overlook the process of identification and his impact in modeling growth-oriented philosophy as an integral component of foster parent training.

Specific instructions for the class you are about to teach are included with the material for each session. Additional class materials are available from the project entitled Seventeen Course Outlines. The project staff hopes you and the members will enjoy the experience and learn much from each other, that all of the participants in the class will be able to better serve children because of their participation.

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SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. Distribute workbooks.
2. Introduce the goals of the course (page 1 of participant's manual).
3. Describe format for learning:
    a. use of workbook
    b. use of small group discussions
    c. use of assignments
4. Introduction of self.
5. Introduction of class participants.
6. Summary:
    a. What have we learned about each other?
    b. Why is it important?
7. Review of development of school age child.
8. Discussion of participants' concerns about the behavior of school age children and when specific concerns will be handled during the course.
9. Review the basic principles of foster care.

Methods:

1. Place workbooks where they are accessible. As class members arrive, welcome them and invite them to sit at one of the pre-arranged tables. Give them a workbook.
2. When the group is assembled, review the goals for the course as they appear on page 1. Restate, rephrase, repeat and give examples in order to ensure understanding.
3. Discuss with the group the methods that will be used to maximize the learning experience.
    a. The manual will allow for the gradual assimilation of new concepts and techniques as well as acknowledgement of the expertise already present in the class members experience. Specifically, the manual provides for ease of note-taking.

   b. Class members will be expected to contribute to small group discussions as a way of sharing knowledge.

   c. Assignments will be given to help the class members prepare for each session as well as provide a way for the experience to become individualized. Explain that assignments are designed to help foster parents focus on their own home and their own foster children.

4. Introduce yourself to the group using the following outline:

   a. Explain that you are going to demonstrate a way of self-introduction that you will ask them to follow in turn. Explain why this process will be useful.

   b. Repeat your name.

   c. Give a brief synopsis of what you remember about your first day of school, what you anticipated, how it felt, what happened, how you reacted and how this may have affected your experience with school.

   d. Be brief - remember each of the class members will be following your model.

5. Invite each class member in turn to tell about him or herself--using steps b and c as described in #4 above. Suggest to the other class members that they may wish to take notes.

6. At the completion of all introductions:

   a. Summarize for the class some of the interesting events or feelings that they have shared. Ask what this suggests about the school experience of many children. Acknowledge with the class the rich experiences and practical knowledge that they bring with them.

   b. Discuss the possibility that different situations and experiences often result in different points of view. Introduce the idea that all points of view will be permitted and discussed.

7. Discuss what is meant by latency and what we know about development. Point out the many changes that occur during the period that we call school age. Stress that each child develops differently and that foster children may have had special experiences that affect their development. Depending on the level of the group, either summarize material in Appendix A or give it as a homework assignment.

8. Give the participants ample time to describe their concerns and the behavioral problems that bother them. List these on the board. List the sessions in which each concern will be handled.

9. Discuss the purpose of foster care, the concept of the team approach

   Ask the group to read Appendix B for the next session.

SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR

Welcome to the first session of Fostering the School Age Child. We will be working together to achieve the following goals:

GOALS

To gain understanding of the growth and development of school age children.

To understand the particular problems of school age children in foster care.

To learn ways to assure the maximum growth and development of school age children.

To develop skills in handling the behavior problems typical of this age.

To learn to deal effectively with the schools.

To learn how to help children move into the larger community and participate in community activities.

To learn the community resources available to school age children and their families.

In order to achieve these goals, many methods will be used to facilitate learning, including the use of guidelines unique for your situation. Please bring this workbook to every session. This is your textbook. Feel free to write in it and use it in any way you feel will be useful.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Since we will be working together over the next several weeks, it is important that we learn a little bit about one another so we will be comfortable in working with each other. List the things about yourself you will be sharing with the group. Include in this list the feelings you remember from early school experiences. Feel free to express both positive or negative feelings.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now use the space below and on the next page to make notes about others in the group.

Why is getting to know others important?

1. Through the process of sharing we begin participating in the class.

2. We find out what things we have in common.

3. We begin looking at ourselves and what we feel is important.

4. We let others know what is important about us and what we think.

When we talk about school age children, we are generally referring to children six to twelve years old. Many people talk of this age as "latency." What do we mean by "latency?"

1. Many of the emotions which are so close to the surface with pre-schoolers and adolescents seem to be more under control, or are less evident.

2. School aged children seem less involved in sexual thinking and fantasy. They know they can't marry their parent and are not yet sexually involved with their own age group. This does not mean that children of this age have no sexual interest. But they are more likely to explore their bodies and pursue their interests in private or with their peers.

Although school age children are generally more placid and easier to handle than either pre-schoolers or adolescents, this doesn't mean there is nothing going on. Let's think about a typical six year old, what are six year olds like?

1. Just learning to play without adult supervision, usually turn to adults for help when having problems with other children.

2. Just learning to share and follow rules.

3. Small - still look like little children.

4. Learning large motor skills - riding bike, swinging, dancing, swimming.

5. Very few academic skills. May count, write name, but probably still learning to tell time, read, do simple arithmetic.

6. Short attention span.

7. Very concrete in thinking and view the reason for things being as they are as helpful to self or humans.

8. See right and wrong as coming from the outside and punishment and rewards, including the reactions of others, as reasons for behaving properly.

What about twelve year olds, what are they like?

Typically, if they are not behind in development or having special problems, they are:

1. able to play without adult supervision
2. able to share, take turns, follow rules and often set up rules
3. much bigger and heavier, some are almost adult size and may be showing physical signs of puberty
4. able to do many physical things - ride bikes, dance, swim (if they have been taught)
5. able to use all basic reading and writing and math skills (if in age appropriate grade at school)
6. able to concentrate for long periods of time on things that interest them
7. beginning to be able to generalize and become more abstract in their thinking
8. beginning to feel uncomfortable if they break rules rather than caring only about external controls

What are some of the things children must learn between six and twelve?

1. How to get along with other children even when there are no adults present

2. How to follow rules, wait their turn, share

3. How to take care of themselves, dress, bathe, grooming techniques

4. How to get about their community, use money, cross streets, mass transportation

5. Basic academic skills in reading, writing, math, telling time, geography, etc.

6. basic motor skills, bike, swinging, swimming, dancing, etc.

7. How to generalize, think in terms of cause and effect

8. How to recognize feelings and appropriately express feelings

9. The meaning of right and wrong in terms of responsibility to other people rather than external control

10. How to get along with adults other than parents

The changes children go through and the things they learn are part of their growth and development. What are some of the things we know about development.

1. The stages are orderly and sequential and cannot be skipped
2. Physical, cognitive (intellectual), social, emotional and moral development go together
3. It is possible to become stuck at any stage
4. Trauma can slow down progress
5. "Abnormal" behavior is often an exaggeration of "typical" behavior
6. A child's developmental level rather than his chronological age is the key to understanding his behavior
7. Growth and development are always our goals. Not control. We are raising adults, not children

Are there any reasons why children in foster care might have more difficulty in achieving this growth and development? What are these reasons?

1. Separation from their family and other traumas may have slowed development
2. Past environment may not have been conducive to development
3. The conditions which led to foster care may have delayed or prevented development
4. Lack of knowledge about what is likely to happen to them makes it difficult to feel secure about present

We will be dealing with most of these problems during this course. In order to do so, we must keep in mind a few basic ideas. These are:

1. Foster care is a team effort--foster families work with agency staff and other professionals to help children and their families. With school age children, teachers and school personnel must be part of the team.

2. The goal of foster care is to provide a healthy environment that promotes a child's growth and development until a permanent plan can be implemented. Return to family or adoption is usually the permanent plan for school age children in foster care.

3. That our job as foster parents is to nurture children and teach them the skills they will need to be competent, responsible adults. We are raising adults, not children. However, learning appropriate behavior is not easy. It takes a long time. That is why children must have parents for eighteen years or so.

4. As foster parents, we only have children a short time. We can not teach them everything they should know or help them to unlearn all the inappropriate things from the past. We can, in a given period, help children and make an impact on their life if we set limited and realistic goals for our children and for ourselves.

During the remainder of this course, we will be discussing ways to help children feel good about themselves. In the next sessions, we will discuss many things about school age children including working with the school and helping children to feel good about themselves. We will talk about discipline and teaching a child responsibility, ways to help a child get along with other people. In the last two sessions, we will discuss how we can make the child feel good in the home and community and how to handle special problems of particular children.

Let's take the time to be sure that we will be able to include all of the major concerns about children of this age.

THINGS WE WANT TO DISCUSS	SESSION IN WHICH THEY WILL BE DISCUSSED

SESSION 2

BUILDING DISCIPLINE AND TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. To define discipline and examine the concepts of internal and external discipline; reward and punishment; rules for disciplining; natural, logical and artificial consequences.
2. To develop effective methods of discipline that utilize the above concepts in a way that enhances the growth and development of children.
3. To examine the use of consequences to help shape a child's behavior.

Methods:

1. Ask the group to summarize the material in Appendix B and get their reactions to the material. Discuss the meaning of discipline. Ask the participants to think about their own personal experiences. Encourage volunteers to share their experiences.
2. Use Appendix C to provide examples or give small group behaviors and ask each to determine natural and appropriate logical consequences. Have the groups share with the class what they have decided.
3. Discuss the importance of rewards, what they mean to us and what they mean to a child. Encourage differences of opinion.

Note: The instructor may want to review the material in Fostering Discipline.

An excellent film for discussion about various styles of discipline is "SPARE THE ROD". This film is part of the FOOTSTEPS series.

SESSION 2

BUILDING DISCIPLINE AND TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY

When we talk about working with school age children, sooner or later we talk about discipline.

What is discipline?

1. teaching
2. a field of study
3. external control
4. inner control
5. punishment and rewards
6.

Discipline is a set of rules for guiding behavior. It can come from the outside or from the inside. The job of parents is to instill discipline that will help the child control his or her own behavior and to do what is right because it feels good to do so.

What are some of the things I do because I know they are right?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

How would I feel if I didn't do these things?

Until we have internalized rules of behavior - doing what is appropriate because it feels right - we need external controls.

External discipline comes when we know someone will reward or punish us. What are some of the rewards I get for doing things I have to do?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What are some of the things I probably wouldn't do if other people did not expect it or demand it?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What are some of the ways I might be punished if I didn't do certain things?

How do I feel when I am rewarded?

How do I feel if I am punished?

How do children feel when they are rewarded?

Feel good about themselves. Want to repeat behavior.

What do we teach them with rewards?

That they can earn goodies. That good behavior is rewarded. That they can choose to do things which make them feel good. That their actions have results.

How do children feel when they are punished?

Bad, no good, angry, ashamed, resistant.

What do we teach them when we punish them?

That they are bad, and incompetent. That the world is a punishing place. That inappropriate behavior has negative consequences.

Through wise use of reward and punishement, parents teach children to behave appropriately and stop inappropriate behavior. As children come to feel good about what they are doing, the rewards become internalized and external rewards are not needed. If children know how to behave appropriately, inappropriate behaviors will make them feel uncomfortable. When this happens, the child has internal discipline and no longer needs external discipline. Internal discipline develops slowly and it is usually adolescence or early adulthood before most people have fully developed internal discipline. Even many adults do not. As foster parents, we want to use external discipline to instill internal discipline. To do this, we must: make children feel good about behavior we approve and never make children feel good about behavior we disapprove.

Until children have developed internal discipline, we must teach them. How do children learn from us?

1. Copying the behavior of others.
2. Having things explained to them
3. Experimenting on their own.
4. Experiencing the consequences of their behavior - both positive and negative consequences.
5.

Teaching a child a new skill means:

1. Explaining why it is important
2. Breaking it into small steps
3. Teaching each step separately
4. Showing how
5. Working with child until step is mastered
6. Rewarding child for learning

When we have a problem with a child's behavior, when he or she is doing things we dislike, or won't do things we think are important, there are several steps we can take for effective discipline.

What are the steps we might take in order to set up effective discipline for particular situations?

1. Specify the behavior we want to encourage or discourage.

2. Assess why the child behaves or fails to behave this way.

3. Determine how important and valuable it is to work on this particular behavior. Set priorities.

4. Change the situations that lead to the inappropriate behavior or failure to behave appropriately.

5. Set up rules.

6. Determine consequences.

7. Make sure I can carry through.

Things to remember:

In determining realistic expectations, I must take into account:

1. child's level of development

2. child's previous experience and opportunity to learn

Discipline is teaching and therefore it is important to constantly evaluate not only what I am trying to teach, but what I am actually teaching through choosing one discipline technique over another.

In order to help children behave in the way that I want them to behave, I must be sure they know what I want or expect of them.

When we say it is necessary to make sure children know what is expected, we imply they might not. How might this happen?

Previous environment didn't give child opportunity. Most jobs have many small steps. Until all are mastered, job can't be done properly.

When we talk about positive consequences, we might say that we are talking about rewarding children. Should I reward a child for doing what he or she ought to do? Yes.
Why?

We all need praise and rewards for recognition and to build self-esteem.

Many people have found the use of natural consequences and logical consequences to be more useful than the use of artificial consequences.

Natural consequences are:

Those arising out of the behavior. If you don't eat, you will feel hungry. If you eat, you'll feel good.

Logical consequences are:

Those which are connected to the behavior. If you ride your bike in the street, you may not ride it anymore today. If you put it away safely every day for a week, you may ride to the park on Saturday.

Artificial consequences are:

Those which are not connected to the behavior. If you don't clean your room, you may not watch T.V.

How does the use of natural consequences teach a child responsibility?

Gives him control. He takes consequences. There is nobody to blame or fight.

How is responsibility related to self-esteem?

The more and bigger responsibilities we are able to take on, the more competent we see ourselves, the better we like ourselves.

For examples of natural and logical consequences, use Appendix C.

SESSION 3

WORKING WITH THE SCHOOL

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. To examine the various ways children react to school and why some have difficulties.
2. To examine the responsibilities of the teacher and the foster parents in helping the child achieve, adjust and develop techniques that enhance the cooperative relationship of the foster parents and the teacher in the education of the foster child.
3. To aid foster parents in deciding their level of involvement in the foster child's homework responsibilities.
4. To examine specific school related problems and develop a plan for their alleviation.
5. To learn about special education designations and what they mean.
6. To learn the rights and responsibililties of parents and children in regards to special education services.

Methods:

1. Ask foster parents to think back to their own experiences and interactions with teachers. Ask them to describe how they felt about teachers as children and how they feel about them now. Then ask them to describe how these positive and negative experiences might effect the way they now interact with school teachers and administrators. Are they cautious or afraid? Do they feel inferior or superior? Do they view teachers with awe, respect, distrust?
2. Have a few of the foster parents describe how and when they communicate with the schools and the outcomes of this communication.
3. Ask foster parents to discuss positive experiences they have had in encouraging homework. Ask for a description also of problems that have arisen around homework and how these problems were resolved.
4. Have foster parents describe problems they had with the foster child and the school. Break into small groups around specific problems and develop plans for handling problems. Be sure to have groups look at what they might ask of the child, the teacher, the caseworker and themselves as foster parents.

5. Explain the difference between mental impairment, emotional impairment and learning disabilities. Have foster parents give examples from their own experience working with children. Refer participants to material in Appendix E.

6. Explain purpose of educational evaluation and planning. Stress the legal right of children to have such services if they need them.

SESSION 3

WORKING WITH THE SCHOOL

A large part of a child's day is spent in school. How he or she gets along with teachers and other students will be important in how the child feels about himself.

When I remember school, I remember:

Why is school not always pleasant for children?

Why might a child in foster care have problems in school?

1. Did not have regular education before
2. Separation has led to developmental lag
3. Handicapping condition
4. Worried and concerned about natural family
5. Worried about own future
6. Feels lost, angry or overwhelmed
7. Previous school was very different

What are the responsibilities of an elementary teacher?

1. Sets up physical conditions and time schedule to maximize learning

2. Within limits set by school, sets learning goals and techniques for achieving these

3. Promotes social structure of classroom to achieve individual feelings of self-worth and good interaction

4. Monitors children's behavior in building and on playground

5. Teaches skills and course content

What are some of the problems the teachers may have in carrying out these responsibilies?

1. Class sizes are large. Appropriate texts and materials are not always available.

2. Children have widely varying abilities and needs

3. Teacher has no control over what happens outside of school

4. Teachers have preferences and get along better with some children than with others

What can I do to aid teachers in fulfilling their educational responsibilities to my children?

1. Inform teacher of special needs or times when child might need extra attention or consideration.
2. Tell teacher things child likes and ways of working with child.
3. Seek assistance with identifying materials that will help child or tutoring services for child.
4. Help child set up schedule to get homework or special assignments done.
5. Develop home library of books, games and other educational devices. Take children on field trips.
6. Encourage child to relate daily activities to school work.
7. Volunteer in the classroom. Be room mother, assist with field trips.

How often, and when, should I talk with the teacher?

At least twice a year (usually fall and spring), right after child is enrolled and whenever child seems to be having problems or is unhappy about school. Try to involve the child's parent(s) in dealing with the school.

What should I tell the teacher at the first meeting?

That you are concerned and want to be involved. If you know how long the child will be in school or anything about his previous school record which might be important. Probably all that is needed here is grade level and when he last attended school. Do not disclose information about child's natural family. Give caseworker's name and number. Discuss agency's discipline policy. State that corporal punishment is not to be used with this child.

What should I tell the teacher about a child?

1. Present behavior. What he can and can't do and what he likes or dislikes.
2. How he gets along with people in general.
3. Any special needs.
4. What you hope to see accomplished during the year.
5.

What shouldn't I tell the teacher?

Any information about the natural family or the reasons for the child being in care.

Any information about past behavior unless it is critical for child's safety.

Do not let teacher blame child's school problems on family situation. Insist on talking about what should be done rather than causes.

What if the teacher asks why the child is in foster care? What do I say?

1. Simply say the family has problems they are trying to work out.
2. Point out you are not free to discuss family's problems.
3. If she insists on more information, suggest that you will have the caseworker notify her.
4.

What if the child comes back upset from weekends with the natural parents: depressed, behaving poorly, or doing poorly in school? What should I tell the teacher?

Explain when the child sees the natural parent, the child often feels upset. He may have difficulties in his behavior or school work for a few days. I can ask if the teacher would like to be informed about the visit so that she or he will recognize the cause. I can also inform the teacher of any methods that seem to work in reducing the child's negative behavior or increasing his sense of security and belonging.

If the teacher contacts me about a problem, what information should I get from the teacher?

- What is the behavior of concern?
- When does it occur?
- Does the teacher have any idea of why?
- What has the teacher done so far?
- What does the teacher plan to do?
- What can I do to help?

What can I do if the teacher is not willing to cooperate with me to resolve the difficulties or help the child?

Talk to the school social worker, principal or child's caseworker.

What should I do if a foster child comes home and says the teacher is mean, cruel, and picks on her because she is a foster child?

Allow child to express feelings and reflect feelings.

2. Try to determine cause. Often, the child will have been reprimanded or not chosen. Do not blame child or scold child further but point out this happens to everyone sometimes and it is natural to feel bad or angry.

3. If the teacher seems to be behaving inappropriately, arrange for a conference and tell the child you will discuss it with the teacher. Try not to place blame or make decisions until you have heard both sides of the story.

What are some of the things children do after school?

1. Free play
2. Outdoor activities
3. Eat
4. Home chores, care for pets
5. Bathing and grooming
6. Read
7. Family activities, games

Are all of these things important?

Yes. They all have a role in building a child's esteem and in aiding growth and development.

In most schools, children either have regular homework or occasional homework. What is my responsibility in making sure a child completes homework assignments?

Structuring a time and place for homework. Pointing out consequences for not doing homework. Providing encouragement and praise for completed work.

How can we fit homework into a busy schedule?

Set aside a certain time and place. It is usually better if a child has a little rest after school before homework. Homework can't be done when a child is very hungry or tired.

Who should decide when a child should do homework?

It is best if a child can schedule homework with my help. I might have to insist on a time if child can't take the responsibility.

Should I help my foster child with homework?

If I can do so without getting angry or making the child angry. I can explain assignments or show how to do it, check answers, help with editing or writing. I should not insist on perfection. I can explore getting a volunteer tutor.

What are some of the things I can do to encourage good study habits at home?

Set up appropriate place and time and encourage child. Listen, be sympathetic and help. Although a quiet place removed from activities may seem best, some children do better with someone else in the room or with music to drown out distractions. Anything which works is O.K.

Should I ever ask for a child to be excused from homework? Under what circumstances?

If a child has a special reason (illness, special event) a note asking for an extension lets the teacher know the excuse is legitimate. If a child cannot get assignments done in a reasonable time, make an appointment with the teacher to see if work load can be adjusted.

If a child is having problems, should I tutor him or her?

This depends on our relationship. Do I have time? Do I understand the work and how it should be done? Can I do so without getting angry or making the child angry?

Explore use of volunteer tutor with worker and/or school.

Should I keep my worker informed of my foster child's progress?

All of the child's school reports and summaries of conferences with the teacher should be part of the child's records. It is very important that this information be shared with the child's parents.

What should I tell the worker?

Academic progress, general adjustment, attitudes toward school, attendance, behavior with other children, behavior with teachers, special interests, special achievements, and problems.

Children Who Fail in School Tasks

How do I feel if a child is having difficulties in school?

1. Hurt, ashamed, angry, looking for someone to blame.
2. Concerned, interested in determining the roots of the failure. (These feelings can be productive.)

When a child is failing in school, we as foster parents can:

1. Talk with the teacher to see if she knows the source of the child's difficulty.
2. As the youngster about fears, problems, or difficulties.
3. Have the child's hearing and vision checked.
4. Ask for testing if the child seems to lack interest. An intelligence test may help to identify whether the material is too difficult or too easy.
5. Try to be patient with the child's progress and do not pressure the child to excell in school.
6. See if the child and the teacher have problems getting along or communicating.
7. Enlist the help of specialized school personnel such as the school social workers and school psychologists. Poor performance may be due to emotional conflicts which are impeding ability to learn.
8. Try to involve the child's family.

The Child Who Cheats in School

Why might a child cheat in school?

1. For fun, to see if he can avoid doing the work, because everybody else does it.
2. Because of the pressure from foster parents to perform well.
3. Because child wants to be a high achiever - get good grades.
4. Because the situation encourages it. The teacher allows the students to talk during tests, leaves the room during testing, etc.
5. Because the child has seen similar behaviors in parents and foster parents and is unaware that this behavior is wrong.

We can help reduce cheating by:

1. Attempting to find out why the child cheated.
2. Reducing the stress placed upon the child to get top grades. Discuss the importance of honesty.
3. Making sure the teacher has given explicit rules about what is considered cheating behavior.
4. Investigating the situation. If cheating is the result of poor monitoring, explaining this to the teacher and asking if anything can be done to alleviate the problem.
5. Setting a good example of honest behavior.

School Phobia

School phobia can be a possibility with a youngster who shows great fear and anxiety when he or she is faced with attending school. This may include physical illness, crying, pleading, becoming ill in school, or running away from school. The words "school phobia" mean being afraid of school, but experts suggest that there may be several other causes for the behavior as well. It should be rememberd that school phobia can show up at any age, but it seems more prevalent in the 6-12 year old age group.

What may cause a child to show signs of school phobia?

1. Fear of separation. The child may fear leaving home thinking that something terrible may happen while he is in school.
2. Fear of something at school--a teacher, principal, a group of threatening students, fearing failure in the classroom, or fearing failure at a playground activity.
3. At times, a child stays home because that is what the child feels a foster parent wants. They may get this impression if the foster parent allows or encourages them to stay home when they are not ill, etc.
4. Sometimes school just appears too confusing. The child doesn't know what is expected. The child may have received a negative picture of school from his biological parent.

Things we can do to aid a child in reducing school phobic behavior:

1. Find out what the child fears.
2. Talk with the teacher about possible difficulties in school which may cause the child to fear attending school.
3. Talk with the child. Allow him to discuss fears and what he doesn't like about leaving home or about going to school.
4. Look for ways you unconsciously encourage the child to stay home.
5. Share any and all findings with the school social worker or school psychologist and follow their recommendations.
6. Contact the foster care worker.
7. Contact the school social worker or school psychologist if problem may need to be handled by a professional.
8. The natural parent can encourage and reassure the child about school.

There are many reasons why children have trouble learning. These include:

1. Physical impairments.*
2. Emotional impairments.*
3. Mental impairments.*
4. Learning disabilities.*

What are the services available to children with these problems?

Schools have developed a number of services and must provide the services once an appropriate diagnosis has been made and an individual educational plan developed.

What can I do if I suspect my foster child may have one of these problems?

Request a diagnosis from the school. Check to see school's obligation on providing a diagnosis. Check to see how quickly the school must respond. Children need a specific plan to meet educational needs. "Mainstreaming" into the regular classroom helps avoid labeling and feelings of being different.

Who will pay for special services for children with these problems?

The school district must provide all services that a child needs in line with individual educational plans.

*Refer to Appendix E for detailed information on impairments.

The child with learning disabilities is a child of normal or better ability who has difficulty in selected areas.

Examples of learning disabilities are:

1. Difficulty in reading, writing, math, or spelling.
2. Difficulty in retaining information (memory).
3. Difficulty in comprehending or understanding verbal or written information.
4. Difficulty in muscular coordination. This may include fine muscle coordination, such as penmanship, or gross muscle coordination skills, such as throwing a ball or running.
5. Difficulty in understanding or following directions.
6. Difficulty in talking.
7. Difficulty in seeing the connection between similar things.
8. Perceptual difficulties. Reversals of letters. Seeing things backwards or "scrambled".

What can I do for a child with learning disabilities?

1. Make sure child has appropriate diagnostic testing.
2. Make sure school comes through on all services available to learning disabled children.
3. Ask about the advisability of home exercises or games.

SESSION 4

SEPARATION TRAUMA

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. To examine the emotional and behavioral responses to separation and loss.

2. To develop techniques for constructively handling the foster child's experience of separation and loss.

3. To review what foster parents might do to help children adjust to their home.

Methods:

1. Ask foster parents to describe their own responses to separation and loss. If the instructor feels comfortable using it, a guided fantasy about loss and separation might be used here. Be sure to give class permission to withdraw from the fantasy.

   Using the five stages of grief and loss, ask foster parents to describe how they might act at various stages of the process.

   Note: The first two pages of this session provide a basic structure for a mild guided fantasy.

2. Break the foster parents into groups of four. Review Virginia Satir's four methods of responding. Ask each member to choose a different response method. Now ask the group to solve a problem or make a group decision such as where to go on vacation. After a few minutes, have the group stop and ask each member how they felt and what frustrations they had with their own role and the roles of the other members in the group. This exercise is often useful for those who learn a concept best by experiencing it. Finish the exercise by asking participants if children in foster care ever use one or more of these response methods.

3. Have group members experienced with pre-placement visits describe the procedures used and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the pre-placement visit.

Ask participants to read Appendix F for next session.

SESSION 4

SEPARATION TRAUMA

Imagine for a moment that you are a school age child (6 to 12 years old). You are told by your parents and a person you do not know (caseworker) that due to family difficulties, you must leave your home and move to a foster home. This foster home is composed of people you have met only once.

How would you feel?

1. Scared, afraid
2. Lost, confused
3. Not know what to do, what to expect
4. Lonely
5. Different, odd
6. Angry

Some people say that going into a new foster home is like going into a foreign country. In what way might that be so?

Each family has their own way of doing things, different foods, different scheudles, different expectations, different rules. Not knowing what to expect and not understanding what is happening is like being in a foreign country. Even the language is different sometimes.

Now let's take a look at the feelings you as a foster child might have toward your foster parents. You have met them and have been placed in their home. What feelings do you have?

1. Afraid, scared

2. Angry at them for taking you away from your home

3. Not understanding what they want or what they will expect

4. Hope they will send you back

5. Afraid they will send you away

6. Confused

7. Wonder what will happen to you

8. Plan to run away

9. Wonder how your parents are feeling and what they are doing.

10.

11.

If a foster child had these feelings how might they behave? What are some of the behaviors and reactions we see in foster children when they first come into our homes?

1. Shock, very quiet, dazed
2. Sad, depressed
3. Crying, whining
4. Looking for someone to take them away
5. Angry, hurtful
6. Sullen, rude, nasty
7. Destructive
8. Sloppy
9. Anxious to please, overly polite
10. Withdrawn, won't interact
11.

Some children have physiological reactions to the changes involved in moving into a foster home. What are some of these?

1. Upset stomach, vomiting
2. Headaches
3. Fevers, flu, sore throat
4. Bowel problems
5. Bedwetting
6. Can't sleep, nightmares
7. Compulsive eating or loss or appetite

Are such illnesses real or imaginary?

They are very real regardless of whether the cause is physical, or emotional trauma.

After you have settled into your foster home and get to know your foster parents, what kinds of things might make it difficult for you to form a good relationship with them?

1. You don't understand what they want. You always seem to say the wrong thing or do the wrong thing.
2. They want to be too close to you. Expect you to love them when you can't.
3. They seem too busy or don't care about you.
4. They say bad things about your family--ask questions you don't want to answer.
5. You hear them talking about you, making fun of you.
6. You feel you won't stay with them very long.
7. You feel they have no right to tell you what to do.
8. You are afraid your parents will be angry if you like your foster parents.

When we experience separation or loss, there is a typical pattern of stages we follow. These stages are:

1. Shock and/or denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

How do school aged children typically act in these stages?

Shock or Denial

Child may seem in a daze. May act as if stay is temporary. May seem very good, withdrawn. May not eat much or enter into routine except in superficial manner. May be very sleepy. May continually watch for parents or someone to return him or her home.

Anger

Child may strike out at foster parents, other children in the home or natural parents. May be very negative and deliberately get into trouble.

Bargaining

Child tries to gain control of situation and tries to find rules for getting what he or she wants, which is often to return to previous situations.

Depression

Child is very sad. May cry or withdraw. May seem sleepy, lose appetite. Appears not to care about anything, to have very little energy.

Acceptance

Child accepts situation although he or she is not necessarily happy about it. Enters into activities, resumes routines, begins to establish new relationships.

In some cases we can clearly observe the stage of loss of the foster child. The child may also express emotions which help us understand. In other cases, the child's behavior or emotional expression is less clear. In these situations, you may see the foster child acting as in one of the following ways:*

1. Computer

   The computer will show no emotion. The computer will seem to understand and accept the circumstances as they are. This child may be able to explain the reasons for separation (either as he perceives it, or as someone has fed the facts to him). He may seem very precocious, analytic and able to respond to the situation with an all-knowing type of response, he may even know the therapeutic jargon that was used to explain the situation. He will seem to be in total control.

2. Placater

   The placater will always attempt to agree to please other persons. This may be the foster child who is "too good to be true." This child will go to great lengths not to upset anyone. He may set impossible goals in the areas of school performance, physical activity or peer relationships in order to please his foster parents. In all situations, he will attempt to be agreeable and will always sacrifice his own needs in order to meet the presumed needs of others.

3. Blamer

   The blamer is the child who attacks others. This child is never at fault. This child may see it as his right to be aggressive toward others, to rebel, to sulk or become destructive. His behavior will reflect these feelings.

4. Distracter

   The distracter is the type of child who attempts to move attention away from the subject at hand. The distracter will use humor, subject change, destructive or aggressive behavior in an attempt to force others to change the focus of their attention away from areas with which she is uncomfortable. When discussion focuses on her natural parents, she may talk abou the benevolence, generosity and goodness of her natural parents, or vividly portray the abuse and brutality or wanton neglect that she experienced in her natural family. Her attempt is to distract others and herself from realistically viewing her parents.

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*Satir, V. People Making. Palo Alto, California: Science Behavior Books, 1972.

What are some of the reasons that a foster child may choose one or more of these patterns?

1. Their past experiences have taught them that this behavior will gain attention.
2. This type of behavior helps them to avoid thinking about what is harmful or painful.
3. This behavior focuses trouble elsewhere.
4. These are coping techniques which sometimes give the child a sense of control.
5. Low self-esteem leads the child to believe that his true feelings are unacceptable.
6. These have been successful in dealing with hurt in the past.
7.

What can a child learn from loss and grieving?

All of life is a series of losses. A child can learn how to handle losses and appropriate ways of acting.

What are some of our concerns about grieving? What might happen if the grieving process doesn't go right?

1. Child may get stuck at a stage.
2. Behavior may become exaggerated.
3. Child may fail to grow and develop.
4. Child may drop so far behind it is difficult to catch up.
5. Child may not be able to trust people and reject all relationships.
6. Child may regress to earlier stages.

What are typical grieving behaviors?

1. Crying, sadness
2. Anger, acting out
3. Withdrawal
4. Loss of appetite
5. Refusal to accept situation
6. Illnesses

How can I aid a child who is grieving?

1. Listen carefully.

2. Accept feelings.

3. Tell child it is "ok" and normal to feel this way.

4. Set limits.

5. Help child put feelings into words.

6. Tell the child that you will help her to work on feeling better in the future.

7. Explain your willingness to help.

8. Tell child realistically what will be happening, in the "Stages of Grieving".

9. Wait and be patient. Do not force child to do things.

10. Let child keep pictures, toys, and other things from former life.

11. Help child start a scrap book about his family and the foster family.

12. Touch or hold the child if he is willing.

13. Give child play materials with which to express feelings, through drawing pictures, pounding a punching bag, shaping modeling clay. Give child books to read or read to child about children who have had losses.

What are some things I shouldn't do?

1. Deny child's feelings or say feelings are wrong.

2. Promise things that can not be.

3. Say that everything will be all right.

4. Punish child for feelings.

5. Force child to talk about past or feelings.

6. Make negative comments about child's past or the natural family.

What questions should I ask the agency before placement or visit?

- What child's routine is like
- What special likes and dislikes he has
- What grade he is in, school experiences
- Medical history and special medical conditions
- Natural family visitations
- Difficult or provocative behaviors
- Type of discipline appropriate for this child

What is a pre-placement visit?

A short visit with the foster family before the decision has been made as to whether the child will be living there. It should be clear as to what voice the child will have in deciding whether he or she will stay.

What are the advantages of a pre-placement visit?

Child gets to see home and meet people. Foster family gets to know child and form some idea of how he or she will fit in.

What should I plan or do on a pre-placement visit?

Try to keep things as normal as possible. Have interesting things for child to do with family members but do not have so many special things happening that child will get unrealistic notion of what will be going on.

If my agency doesn't have pre-placement visits, what might I do?

Talk to agency about setting up pre-placement visits on at least an experimental basis or whenever feasible.

Get as much information as possible about child before placement especially about schedule and likes and dislikes.

Try to talk with the natural parent to gather information and learn about the child.

SESSION 5

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM: THE ROLE OF THE NATURAL FAMILY

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. To examine the reasons why children in foster care may have poor self-esteem with emphasis on the child's past experiences.
2. To introduce techniques for increasing self-esteem.
3. To examine the importance of the natural family to the child, why natural families may behave the way they do and to develop techniques for allowing and encouraging interaction between foster children and their families.
4. To develop techniques for encouraging children in foster care to share their feelings about their family.

Methods:

1. Review what participants have learned about development and how grief affects a child.
2. Allow and encourage foster parents to describe successful methods they have used to develop self-esteem, and things that can change self-esteem. Break into small groups and discuss the disciplinary techniques in Appendix D. For each technique have them concentrate on what the impact of a given technique might have on a child's self-esteem.
3. Allow foster parents to ventilate feelings about natural parents' behavior. Following each description of problem behavior, insist that the participants think of possible reasons why natural parents might act that way. Brainstorm reasons for the behaviors.
4. Ask participants to role play foster parents.
    a. talking to children about their natural parents.
    b. welcoming natural parents into their home and providing a conducive environment for interaction with the child.

NOTE: Instructor may want to review material in Working With Natural Families and Emotional Development by Emily Jean McFadden.

SESSION 5

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM: THE ROLE OF THE NATURAL FAMILY

During the first session, we talked about the areas of growth and development of foster children and some of the problems in these areas. These areas are:

1. physical

2. emotional

3. cognitive or intellectual

4. social

5. moral

All of these areas are related to each of the other areas. For instance, a child who is smaller than the other children may not be able to play with others the way they expect. A child who isn't doing well in school may act up or have nightmares.

One of the most important tasks of foster parents is to help a child feel good about himself or herself or build "self-esteem." A child who doesn't have a good self-image is likely to withdraw, act up, or stop trying.

Why might foster children have poor self-esteem or feel they are not very worthwhile?

1. Blame themselves for being in foster care.
2. Feel their parents are "no good" and neither are they.
3. Find it difficult to keep up with other children their age.
4. Feel lost because of new situation.
5. Have few friends or important relationships.
6. Have special problems or handicaps.
7. Have few things or have lost things from before.
8. Don't know what is going to happen, feel out of control.
9. Feel different.
10. Feel they are unworthy because their parents don't want them.

What are some of the things I can do as a foster parent to help a child feel more worthwhile?

1. Give praise and attention.
2. Point out good points about natural family.
3. Provide structure so child knows what is happening.
4. Help children develop areas of ability.
5. Give child as much information as possible about future.
6. Help child develop friends.
7. Encourage participation in activities.
8. Give child opportunity to earn money, treats.
9. Respect child's privacy.
10. Respect child's belongings.
11. Help child be physically safe.
12. Listen carefully to child's feelings.
13. Help child decide how to answer questions (especially about his family situation).
14. Let child know I am interested and will help.

What are some of the things which I should avoid as damaging to self-esteem?

1. Criticism and complaints about child. I can point out behavior I don't like but not characteristics of the child.

2. Criticism and complaints about natural family.

3. Comparisons of child with other children.

4. Arbitrary decisions, rules, plans.

5. Nagging about little things. I will work on one or two important things at a time.

6. Telling the child how to feel or not to feel.

7. Throwing away or belittling possessions from previous homes.

8. Not keeping promises made to the child.

9. Severe punishments. I will use rewards for good behavior whenever possible.

10. Making threats, particularly threats to have the child moved.

How are the natural families of children in foster care important to the development of self-esteem?

1. Every child feels a part of both parents. To the extent he feels his parents are not very good, neither is he.

2. Natural parents may have blamed child for events leading to coming into care.

3. Child can't grow and develop without resolving feelings about parents.

4. To extent child may return home, it is important to help her maintain relationship with family.

What are some of the life stresses we as foster parents face as we go from day to day?

1. Economic - inflation, lay-offs, extra expenses

2. Illness - acute or chronic; changes in physical condition

3. Absences and losses of those we feel are important

4. Break downs and accidents - cars, appliances, etc.

5. Frustration as others fail to meet our needs.

Natural parents, of course, have these stresses as well. What combination of the above reasons might cause the natural parent to become overwhelmed and might contribute to inadequate parenting?

1. A number of losses, job, spouse, parent, friends

2. Economic problems, poor living conditions

3. Physical or mental illness or handicap

4. Drug or alcohol abuse, criminal behavior

Put yourself in the role of a natural parent whose child has been placed in foster care. How would you feel?

1. Sad, shocked, empty, numb
2. Nervous, embarassed, ashamed, guilty
3. Relieved, thankful
4. Angry, humiliated, bitter
5. Worried, paralyzed, not knowing what to do
6. Depressed, feel nothing is worthwhile
7. Suicidal

How might a natural parent feeling this way act toward a child in foster care?

1. Overly sensitive, see criticism in everything.
2. Confused and vague; at a loss of what to say, deny repsonsiblity or ability to contribute.
3. Hopeless. See child as better off or loving foster parents more.
4. Angry. Reject foster parents. Reject child. Complain. Say everything is wrong.
5. Seek ways of making visit easier by being forward or getting drunk before coming.
6. Making the child wild promises about how things will be when the child returns.
7. Envying the child--wanting nurturing from the foster parents for themselves.

How might the natural parent act toward the foster parent?

1. Angry, hostile, aggressive.
2. Withdrawn, distant.
3. Critical, complain.
4. Self-pitying, tearful.
5. Avoid coming, show up late.
6. Brag about own circumstances or make unrealistic statements.
7. Arrive drunk, on drugs.

If you were a natural parent feeling like this, what could a foster parent do to make you feel more accepted?

1. Accept my feelings. Be non-judgemental. Listen.

2. Promote involvement with the child. Ask for information. Tell me how things are going. Ask for my input. Include me in special holidays, visits to teachers.

3. Avoid giving me instructions or orders in front of child or others.

4. Encourage me to visit and make visits comfortable. Set up schedule that is convenient to me. Allow me privacy with my child.

5. Minimize competition for child's love and affection.

6. Accept my love for my child even if I have difficulty showing it and let my child love me.

7. Pay a little attention to me as a person.

Why are visits from the natural parent important?

1. They reassure the child that his parents still love him.
2. They help parents and child maintain relationship.
3. They help prevent fantasies.
4. They allow child to learn about his past.
5. They allow parents to learn about child and see him in a new setting.
6. They allow parent and child to prepare for return.
7.
8.

What can I do to make visits more pleasant?

1. Provide privacy.
2. Provide toys, games, books.
3. Provide refreshments.
4. Show parent around house.
5. Help child plan activities for visit.

Should I encourage children to talk about their natural parents?
_Yes____ **Why?**

The child has feelings and ideas which must come out. If they don't, child will develop fantasies, feel he is "no good", become angry and lost.

Besides visitations, how else can we encourage conversation about the natural parents?

1. Make a scrap book or life book.
2. Discuss family situations on T.V. or in books.
3. Talk about the way other families act.
4. Point out good things about the natural parents.
5. Talk about things which happen regularly, like Christmas, and ask child what he remembers.
6. Encourage child to write letters or make presents for parents.
7. Point out positive resemblance of child to his family.

What makes it difficult for me to talk with a child about his natural parent?

1. The child may be disrespectful of parents and I don't like to appear to condone this.
2. The child may be unrealistic or optimistic and say things I know are not true.
3. I would rather child forget things which have happened in the past. I don't want to upset him.
4. I don't want to appear nosy.
5. The things the child describes make me uncomfortable. There are things about his parents and their lifestyle I just don't approve of.
6. I would like the child to just forget the past and be a part of our family.

What if a child is unrealistic about his or her natural parents and refuses to see their faults?

Reflect feelings. Repeat child's statements prefacing with "It would be nice if..." or "You would like it if..." or "You hope that..." It is not my job to tell child the truth. Truth is subjective. It depends on our point of view. Each of us eventually develops a realistic picture of our parents but an outsider's evaluation may be destructive.

What can I do if a child is very negative about his or her natural parents?

Reflect feelings: anger, sadness. Point out that not everyone can show their love in the same way or is able to show their love at all. People have problems which get in their way. Reassure the child he is not to blame and it is not his fault.

SESSION 6

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. To examine social tasks of school age children in foster care and some of their problematic behaviors, specifically sex role behavior, interaction with other children, interaction with adults, drugs and sexuality.
2. To provide participants the opportunity to express their worries and concerns.
3. To examine some of the behaviors that adults find most worrisome.
4. To develop methods to help participants deal with these behaviors.

Methods:

1. Encourage participants to share feelings about substance abuse and sexuality. Discuss what these behaviors might mean to children in foster care.
2. Some foster parents may wish to voice concern over the way the manual reduces the distinction between how boys and girls act. Allow participants ample opportunity to discuss their feelings (which may include anger, confusion and fear of homosexuality).
3. Ask participants to list those behaviors which they personally find the most offensive. Remind them that the problems they find most offensive are problems which they may find most difficult to tolerate even as they try to help a child.
4. Discuss ways in which participants can handle problems children have with other children. Break the participants into small groups and ask each to generate plans to handle particular behaviors. After each group has reported to the larger group, repeat process with problems children have with adults.

NOTE: The Instructor may want to review material in Guiding the Sexual Development of the Foster Child by Carolyn Veresh.

SESSION 6

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Last session we discussed the role of natural parents in developing a child's self esteem. Another important part of the way children feel about themselves is the way they get along with other people.

What are the social tasks children must learn between 6 and 12?

1. Consolidate sex role behavior by learning how boys and girls are different, and behaving like other members of the same sex.
2. Learn to get along with peers.
3. Learn to get along with adults outside of the family.

What are some of the problems foster children may have interacting with other children?

1. Fighting
2. Bullying
3. Crying
4. Refusing to share, take turns
5. Withdrawing
6. Allowing self to picked on, scapegoated

How do foster children feel when other children ask them why they are in foster care?

Embarassed, don't know what to say, feel different

What do they usually say?

Can we help them think up an appropriate answer?

> YES. They need not share their private business but will feel more secure if they have thought through an answer which is true, but which is also comfortable. A good "cover story" will normalize the child's situation as much as possible, and will portray the family's situation in a positive light.

What are some of the problems children have getting along with adults?

1. Sassy, rude, talking back

2. Fearful, timid

3. Ignoring, doesn't follow directions

4. Overanxious to please

5.

6.

Drugs

One thing we hear a lot about today, is that children are getting involved in certain behaviors at an earlier age. Young children are now becoming involved with behaviors that used to be of concern with teens (drug use, sexual relationships, running away). Why might we find these behaviors at earlier and earlier ages?

1. Children are maturing earlier.
2. Peer groups have more access to drugs, freedom, privacy.
3. Mass media makes such behaviors seem attractive.
4. Foster children may have lived in families or neighborhoods where such behaviors were more common.

Why might young children become involved in drugs?

1. Peer pressure.
2. The child is unhappy and drugs provide false feeling of happiness.
3. Parents and other adults model inappropriate use of drugs.
4. Drugs may provide a way of attracting attention from adults.
5. Drug usage may be a way of hurting adults because of anger children feel.
6. It's "cool".
7. Someone may be using drugs to exploit the child (i.e., sexual abuse, pornography).

What might I do to educate children about drugs?

Severe scare stories usually turn children off. They don't believe them and see their friends using drugs without the serious consequences such stories suggest. Library, school and local police department are good sources for drug education. I should learn what my children are being exposed to and discuss it with them. Although I can state my values, I should discuss drugs in terms of appropriateness, legal and physical consequences, safety. I should set firm limits and explain why.

What should I do as a foster parent if I suspect one of my foster children is experimenting with drugs?

- Provide good information about consequences.
- Set rules - being careful to state rules in terms of behavior I can control.
- Provide structure.
- Discuss this problem with worker.
- Seek help if child is using drugs regularly or if their use is interfering with school work or social relationships or if child is likely to get into legal trouble.
- Seek medical evaluation/treatment if needed.

Sex Roles

Many people today are concerned about raising boys and girls to be similar or different. What are some of the differences we expect between boys and girls?

	Boys are:		Girls are:
1.	loud, noisy	1.	soft
2.	aggressive, competitive	2.	good with people
3.	good at math	3.	poor at math
4.	poor at reading	4.	good at reading
5.	strong	5.	neat
6.	active	6.	motherly

How do boys learn to be boys?

1. From their fathers and other adult males

2. From their peers

3. From the way in which their mothers and other women treat them

4. From television, books, etc.

How do girls learn to be girls?

1. From their mothers and other adult women

2. From their peers

3. From the way in which their fathers and other men treat them

4. From television, books, etc.

Should boys be encouraged or allowed to:

1. Cry? YES
2. Do dishes? YES
3. Cook? YES
4. Babysit? YES
5. Play with girls? YES

Should girls be encouraged to:

1. Show anger? YES
2. Play "boy's games"? YES
3. Do mechanical things? YES
4. Do yard work? YES
5. Play with boys? YES

What would happen if boys and girls were treated just alike?

Sexuality

When we talk about school age children as being in the period of latency, it is partly because we used to think they were not very interested in sexual things. They tend to play with children of the same sex, showing little interest in children of the opposite sex. They seldom ask questions about where babies come from like pre-schoolers nor are as concerned about their own sexual development as are teens. We now know children of this age are sexually aware, interested and curious.

What are some of the things children should know about their bodies and about sex at this age?

By the time children enter school, they probably know or are ready to know about the differences between male and female physiology, the male role in conception, how the baby develops inside of the mother's body and how it is born.

By the time they enter puberty, they are capable of assimilating physiological knowledge of male and female bodies. They should know about menstruation, nocturnal emissions, and other phsyiological facts which they will soon face. Most children of this age have heard about birth contol, abortions, homosexuality, prostitution, etc. Good information from adults will clear up misconceptions which might get them into trouble.

They should know that some adults sexually abuse children. They should know the difference between "good touches" and "bad touches." They should recognize the lures of child molesters, how to run away and ask for help.

What are some of the things children should know about their bodies before they reach puberty?

- About the changes male and female bodies go through during puberty
- Appropriate sexual hygiene
- Consequences of various kinds of sexual behaviors
- Community resources and where to seek help with sexual problems.
- Birth control information

What are some of the sexual behaviors we find problematic in school aged children?

- Masturbation
- Playing doctor or bathroom games
- Exhibitionism
- Peeking at other children or adults
- Interest in pornography
- Homosexual exploration
- Being sexually victimized

Feelings about what types of sexual behaviors are appropriate under what circumstances are changing rapidly. Children have always done things which would have troubled or upset adults.

Why might children in foster care have different sexual values or sexual behaviors than my family?

- Their family background may have given them different values.
- They may have been sexually exploited.
- They may use sexual behaviors to punish our family or express their anger.

What are some things that foster parents can do to aid children in becoming more comfortable with their sexuality?

- Provide good educational materials.
- Answer questions frankly.
- Differentiate feelings and behaviors.
- Discuss behavior in terms of appropriateness.
- Accept the naturalness of sexuality and sexual behaviors for all ages.
- Express own values and explain reasons for them.
- Teach them to protect themselves from sexual exploitation.

When is childhood sexual behavior an indication that children need professional help?

1. When the behavior is harmful to their growth and development.
2. If the behavior is compulsive - prevents participation in other important activities.
3. If the behavior is disruptive of social relationships.
4. If they allow themselves to be exploited or exploit others.
5. If they are involved in illegal behavior.
6. If it occurs consistently in inappropriate situations.

SESSION 7

SELF-ESTEEM IN HOME AND COMMUNITY

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. To examine the contribution of ethnicity, race, religion and culture in the development of self esteem.

2. To generate ideas and techniques for reducing the effect of prejudice and discrimination on minority children and help them increase personal self-esteem and pride in their racial and ethnic heritage.

3. To determine the services offered in the foster parent's community to meet the various needs of children.

Methods:

1. Discuss the importance of various social categories and how they affect the way we feel about ourselves. Have a minority foster family discuss the problems which may occur in cross-ethnic foster care. The group might discuss some of the prejudice and discrimination they have experienced and their emotional reactions to this. Group might discuss different holidays, customs, food, stories and songs, history, and significant people in different cultural and ethnic groups. Discuss what families may do when a child is different in race, ethnicity, or religion from the family.

2. Discuss the importance of changing people's attitudes and what people can do when they meet discrimination. Small groups may be used to generate ways of helping a child in dealing with discrimination.

3. Brainstorm reasons why a foster family or child might need additional community support or services. Once these needs are defined, list agencies which could meet these needs. Discuss the various resources in appendix G.

NOTE: Instructor may wish to consult Emotional Development of the Child in Foster Care by Emily Jean McFadden.

SESSION 7

SELF-ESTEEM IN HOME AND COMMUNITY

One important aspect of helping children feel good about themselves is understanding their culture, background and the way in which they live. In our society, we pride ourselves on our ability to accept and cooperate with many different types of people but we sometimes still find it difficult to understand people who behave differently than we would.

How do I think of myself? What important groups do I identify with?

Race?________________________________

Religion?______________________________

Ethnicity?_____________________________

Sex?_________________________________

Social Class?__________________________

Job?_________________________________

Age?_________________________________

Which of these are most important to me?

What are some of the things I do or have which I associate with my racial, ethnic, or cultural identity?

Holidays or special customs:

Food:

Stories, songs:

History:

Special people:

Other things:

If I have a foster child who has a different cultural background than that of our family, what are some of the things I might do to make him feel good about his own background?

Find other people or clubs or organizations of people with similar background and encourage relationships. Find books, records and materials in library. As a family, learn about holidays, special events.

Encourage interaction with relatives. Praise accomplishments, notice differences in a positive fashion, be interested.

As the parent of a minority child (whether I am a member of that minority or not), what are some of the things I might want to help the child with?

- Allow child to ventilate feelings.

- Help child learn to cope with and accept failure.

- Point out ways in which differences are positive.

- Help child in developing positive self-concept.

What are some of the problems a minority child might face in school?

1. Ridicule or avoidance from other children.
2. Cultural differences may result in poorer school work or test scores.
3. Teachers may have lower expectations.
4. Language differences may cause problems in understanding what is expected.
5. Teacher may pick out child in positive or negative way.
6. Child may not respond or act the way teacher expects.
7. Being different may be compounded by being without one's own family.
8. Books and other materials may reflect a white, middle class cultural bias. The child may have no role models.
9.
10.
11.

Different cultures have different ideas about discipline and how to show respect. For example, Hispanic children are taught to lower their eyes to show respect to an adult. However, an Anglo teacher may view this as a sign of the child's avoidance or dishonesty.

How can the foster parent help child face discrimination from others?

1. Help the child see discrimination as other's weakness or rudeness.
2. Make sure child's rights are protected.
3. Teach child what is appropriate to expect from others; what to do if he or she is not treated equally.
4. Try not to be either over-protective or force child into painful situations.

Using the appendix on Self-Concept Development, what specific steps would I use to help a minority foster child?

1. Model positive feelings about different minority groups and especially about own and child's.
2. Help child to see that every group has good and bad members, and it is ok to take pride in accomplishments of members.
3. Help child to discuss strengths of all groups.
4. Help child to praise strengths of all groups.
5. Help child to see individuals can rely on group members but remain separate.

How do foster parents aid the child with these problems?

1. Modeling appropriate non-discrimination.
2. Finding out as much as possible about different groups, different customs.
3. Refusing to listen to racial slurs or ethnic jokes.
4. Teaching child appropriate responses to discrimination.
5. Protecting the child's rights.

If the foster parent is not a member of the same minority group the child is part of, where can they find out more regarding minority values, customs, traditions, foods, hygiene, etc.?

1. From groups made up of that nationality, religion, race, or ethnicity.

2. Libraries, bookstores, television.

3. From natural family, other members of child's group, other foster parents.

4. Ask for speaker at your church or club.

5.

If my foster child is not of the same religion as my family, how can I help with his or her religious education?

By respecting child's religious beliefs even if they are different.

By encouraging child's attendance at services of his or her choice.

Many, if not most, children in foster care come from families which are called lower class, poor or disadvantaged.

What are some of the possible problems of disadvantaged families?

1. Poor skills or education leads to underemployment or unemployment.
2. Few financial resources and no financial security.
3. Insufficient food or food of poor quality.
4. Inadequate housing, crowding, and poor neighborhoods.
5. Frequent moving around.
6. Use of or exposure to drugs and alcohol.
7. Inadequate medical care.
8. Poor self-esteem and low expectations.
9. Few resources to stimulate child.
10. Fear of authority--bosses, teachers and police.
11. Exposure to physical threats and physical violence.
12. Lack of power or control over their lives.

What are some of the strengths of poor or disadvanted families?

Many families are able to develop coping skills that middle-class families never have to. They are capable of making the most of resources and often have networks of friends and relatives with whom they share. They stress values other than material ones.

What can foster parents do to aid disadvantaged children to make up for any deficits they might have?

1. Make sure child has appropriate medical attention, that immunizations are up-to-date.
2. Provide healthy diet. If child doesn't like certain foods approach gradually but try to make sure child has balanced diet.
3. Recognize importance of food to child. He or she may never have had enough.
4. Do not expect the child has learned the same values and manners as our children. Expect to teach and take time.
5. Help with school and school work. Provide stimulation and educational experiences.
6. Provide child with opportunity to develop social relationships, youth clubs, explore community.
7. Give praise and attention.
8. Teach him how to handle money (allowance).
9. Help child with sports or lessons for physical development.

Most communities have a number of activities for children. What are some of the ways in which community activities would be useful for building the self esteem of my foster child?

1. Help develop social relationships with peers and other adults.

2. Stimulate mental and physical development.

3. Teach new skills.

4. Build self-esteem

Foster children come into placement with a variety of problems and needs. These may include behavioral and emotional problems, lags in development, physical handicaps, intellectual deficiencies, and needs for belonging. Though many foster parents have the skill to deal with these difficulties, it is unrealistic, and potentially destructive to the child, to assume that foster parents can handle all the difficulties and meet all of every child's needs. We must remember there is good reason for the team approach to fostering. It takes the combined effort and special expertise of foster parents and the foster care worker, and often the involvement of other community agencies to most responsibly meet the needs of the child in care.

The community contains many agencies and programs that provide a variety of services for children.

How would I as a foster parent feel about asking for community assistance for children in my home?

Why might a child in a foster family need services?

1. The child brings problems from previous life experiences.
2. The child as a new family member may trigger reactions in the family.
3. The new family situation may make some of the child's problems more severe.
4. The child has special needs or a handicapping condition.
5.

How might the agency foster care worker be involved?

1. In discussing and evaluating the seriousness of the problem.
2. In making referrals.

Using Appendix G, what agencies might I find helpful in dealing with children in foster care?

1.
2.
3.
4.

How can I tell if a child needs therapy for psychological or emotional problems?

If the child behaves in dangerous, destructive or illegal ways.
If the child is very withdrawn.
If the child regresses or changes behavior patterns for no obvious reason. It is then important to get a professional opinion.

SESSION 8

LIVING WITH THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

INSTRUCTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

1. To examine emotional, behavioral and social problems of children in foster care.

2. To develop techniques for helping the foster child cope with and eventually overcome these emotional, behavioral and school-related problems.

3. To review disciplinary techniques and rewards.

4. To examine the importance of an allowance for children and determine how it should be given and used.

Methods:

1. Since there are more areas to cover than time allows, ask each foster parent to choose two topics from those listed which they most want to cover. Tally up scores and discuss the five topics which have received the most votes. Three of these topics are included in the material for the session. Others are in Appendix H.

   In order to "personalize" each topic, ask the foster parent to briefly discuss (five minute maximum) the characteristic behavior of a foster child exhibiting this problem.

2. If your group wishes to cover several topics, form small groups. Have them answer the questions in the workbook on that problem behavior. Assign one member of each group to report the results to the whole group. After fifteen minutes of group work, reconvene in the large group and have each group report with a brief discussion on each topic to follow immediately after each report. In this way it is possible to cover many more areas.

   Many people have experienced the problems mentioned during their own childhood. Ask the group if any would wish to briefly explain: 1) their feelings and behaviors; 2) reasons they felt they were experiencing the problem; and 3) how they coped with the problem and/or how it was overcome.

   Some topics are from Parents Magazine's Guiding Your Child From Six To Twelve; What Parents Need To Know During The Learning Years. The instructor may wish to read this material in preparation for the session.

3. Briefly ask the class to review what they have learned earlier about discipline and rules.

4. Discuss the concept of allowance and whether this should be used as a reward for good behavior or whether it is seen as a right of a child. Break into groups to develop a plan for handling allowances, using the planning sheet.

SESSION 8

LIVING WITH THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

Living with children of any age presents certain problems but many people find the school age child less problematic than either older or younger children. Why?

What are some of the problems we have in the home with children at this age?

The child who is jealous.

The child who is aggressive.

The sloppy child.

The child who insists on always being the center of attention.

The child who always feels wronged.

The child who feels inferior.

The child who is withdrawn.

The child who is overactive.

The child who is accident prone.

The child who is always daydreaming.

The highly competitive child.

Others:

Jealousy and Fighting

Jealousy is an emotion that most children feel. It may be aimed toward a parent, a friend, another child in the family, or an acquaintance.

How might I know a child is jealous?

1. Child shows anger.
2. Child fights or teases.
3. Child complains that treatment of him is unfair or the child sulks.

What can I do to reduce the intensity of a child's jealousy?

1. Accept jealousy as all right for a child to feel.
2. Listen to the complaints, allow the child to talk about it. Do not scold, ignore, or "preach" to the child. Instead, listen to the feelings the child is expressing.
3. Assure the child that he or she is valued.
4. Give the child extra attention, and extra time.
5. Ask the child what he plans to do to alleviate the jealousy.

How can I diminish or minimize fighting behavior?

1. Accept some fighting among children as inevitable and set limits.
2. Allow the children to express their feelings about each other verbally. Listen non-judgmentally and try to understand how they feel.
3. Do not allow physical attacks.
4. Watch for signs of conflict between children and separate before the fight begins.
5. Channel angry feelings into contructive outlets. "Why don't you run around the house?" "Why don't you help mom rake leaves?" "Why don't you help dad make dinner?"
6. Accept and respect each child for what he or she is.
7. Encourage their sense of individuality which will reduce resentment between children. Encourage each to build on their skills and their talents.
8. If fighting is harmful and continuous, this may indicate more serious difficulties and family should seek outside help.

Some children seem to be much more aggressive then others. We are talking about agressive behavior that offends others, provoking or hurting others physically or verbally, bullying.

Why are some youngsters so agressive?

1. Some think this is the best way to get what they want. Some have been physically abused and need to learn new patterns.

2. Some need attention and find it difficult to interact with others. They will use aggression such as physical or verbal attacks to show their superiority or to move to a position of superiority.

3. Some attack because they feel they have been wronged physically or psychologically. Their attacks are for revenge.

4. Some desire to dominate because they feel inferior. They attempt to gain supiority through aggression, to compensate for their inferiority.

How should I respond to this aggressiveness?

1. Attempt to define the cause of the aggressive behavior. Ask the the child or talk about feelings.

2. If the cause can be defined, one of the following may help; otherwise seek help from the school social worker, foster care worker, or community agency:

    Give more attention.
    Allow opportunity to express feelings.
    Help develop skills in negotiating with other children.
    Teach child how to take time out.

Sloppiness

As parents and foster parents of school age children, we all come in contact with this problem. The youngster who refuses to wash - or wash well, who "forgets" to comb his hair, who "never" changes her clothes, who always leaves his room in shambles, who seldom puts her things away, or whose manners leave much to be desired. Often, these behaviors are very evident at the ages of 9 or 10. Though foster parents may think this behavior is done simply to annoy them or increase their work, this is seldom the case.

What are more probable reasons for sloppiness?

1. Most children are not very interested in being totally clean or neat.
2. Cleanliness and orderliness may not have been stressed as much in his natural home, so he either did not learn or is not particularly concerned about these areas of his life.
3. Because of the trauma of separation, the child may be depressed, unhappy with self. This might cause sloppy behavior.
4. Many activities of youngsters encourage getting dirty and messy.
5. When a child is beginning to test his individuality, pleasing parents may be less important than peer activities.
6. Children at this age may question the logic of getting totally clean or keeping their room in perfect order. "Why wash when I'm just going to get dirty again?"
7. Messiness may indicate that a child is busy with many activities. This type of "industry" is appropriate for this developmental stage.

What can the foster parent do about the sloppiness of a foster child?

Look for the cause

a. If the child seems sad or depressed it is more important at first to alleviate these feelings.

b. If the child has not learned these skills, teach the child. Show the child how to wash, pick up, make the beds. Encourage and support each attempt the child makes, even if they are not up to your standards.

c. If the child is simply in a sloppy stage, then

1) Try to compromise on cleanliness. The child will not be as clean as you would like, but probably will agree to be cleaner than he would like.

2) Encourage and reinforce each attempt at cleanliness.

3) Explain exactly what you want her to wash. Don't assume she will know. Tell her to wash both the front and the back of her hands, instead of just washing her hands.

4) You have a right to have rooms used by everyone orderly. Specifically state what you want picked up and where you want it stored.

5) If the child is able to find things and work in his room, be tolerant of its sloppiness.

6) If the room is no longer functional for the child, ask the child to pick it up and offer to help. She will probably appreciate the rescue and aid.

As we examine the various behaviors of school age children, we should remember the steps we listed in Session 2. These are:

1. Specify the behaviors in question.
2. Assess why the child behaves this way.
3. Change the situation to discourage inappropriate behavior and encourage appropriate behavior.
4. Decide if it is a high priority behavior to be worked on.
5. Establish rules and clearly communicate them to child.
6. Set consequences and discuss with child.
7. Carry through consistently.

Top priority behaviors are:

Those which are dangerous, destructive or illegal
Those that disturb me to the point I might lose control
Those that have negative long range consequences
Those that lower self-esteem
Those that interfere with social relationships

Good rules:

- -Are specific.
- -Are stated positively whenever possible.
- -Can be monitored.
- -Provide alternatives.
- -Concern behavior under control of the child.

Consequences for behavior should be:

- -Relatively mild.
- -Consistently followed as closely as possible upon behavior.
- -Both positive and negative.
- -Connected logically to the behavior in question.
- -Established in advance of behavior.
- -Designed to teach the child about responsibility rather than emphasizing control.

Money and Allowance

Is it appropriate to give or withhold money as a consequence of behavior?

Money is very important to our society and is generally used as both a reward and punishment (salaries, fines). Many children in foster care have had little opportunity to earn good things. Learning to do so can help self-esteem. Money can't replace affection, encouragement or praise.

How do children learn about using money?

From watching others and from practice.

Why might children use money inappropriately?

1. They want everything immediately - need instant gratification.
2. They want to spend money as soon as they have it.
3. They have had poor models in the past.
4. They have not been taught to plan or budget.

Should children be given an allowance?

It is a useful technique to teach them how to spend money by giving them choices and control. If they are free to choose how to spend their money, they learn to live by the consequences of their choices.

What is my agency policy on giving allowance?

What should the allowance cover?

It is better to start in a small way and not give children money for things which they need and would have to do without if they did not spend wisely. As they learn they can get larger allowances to cover more (school lunches, school supplies, clothes).

Should children be made to save part of their allowance?

If they are to learn, they should have the choice.

Should children be paid for jobs they do around the house?

Probably some jobs should be part of their responsibility to the family. Extra jobs for money gives them the opportunity to take on additional responsibility, get things they want and build self-esteem.

What limits should I put on a child who uses his or her allowance in the "wrong" way?

First I must determine what is wrong. If the child is using money to support dangerous or illegal behavior I must intervene immediately. It is not the money but the behavior which is my concern. If child is going without lunches to buy treats I should talk with child to determine if 1) he doesn't have enough money for things he wants or 2) if I have given him too much responsibility.

Many foster children tell us that the agency is giving us money to care for them and that should be their money. What if a child tries to demand money or things on the basis that the agency payment is really his or her money.

All foster parents should keep records of costs of foster care. I can explain to the child how much money we get and how it is spent. This can be a good opportunity to teach the child about family budgeting and show how things like electricity and insurance must be paid.

How much should children know about the family's finances?

As families differ, this is a personal family decision. The more I am able to share with a child, the more I teach him.

The chart on the next page provides a framework for working out a plan for allowances and chores.

ALLOWANCE AND CHORE WORKSHEET

CHILD'S NAME ____

ALLOWANCE ____________________

THINGS ALLOWANCE SHOULD COVER:

CHORES WHICH MUST BE DONE:

CHORES	WHEN DONE	REWARD OR CONSEQUENCES

CHORES FOR EXTRA MONEY:

CHORES	HOW MUCH?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A..........DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

APPENDIX B..........ARE WE RAISING CHILDREN OR ADULTS?

APPENDIX C..........NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

APPENDIX D..........REWARDS

APPENDIX E..........SPECIAL SCHOOL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

APPENDIX F..........SELF-CONCEPT

APPENDIX G..........COMMUNITY SERVICES AVAILABLE TO FOSTER PARENTS

APPENDIX H..........KEEPING THE BED DRY

APPENDIX I..........EXAMPLES OF FORMS WHICH MAY HELP FOSTER PARENTS

APPENDIX A

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

Typically the child between 6 and 12:

Physical	...develops better large muscle coordination (riding a bike) and begins mastery of fine motor coordination (writing, building model airplanes).
Intellectual	...is able to generalize about similar items to form mental categories. Learns math skills. Learns to order things, largest to smallest, tall to short. In later elementary school years, learns to think systematically and generally about concrete objects. Learns the concept of past, present, future. Begins to see that the physical work operates according to physical laws. Can use hypotheses. Reading is the most significant intellectual skill learned.
Social	...conforms to expectations of others, and begins to be able to understand another's point of view. In later elementary school, children begin to form "best friends" friendships. During these later years, the child's friends develop standards for acceptance and rejection. Older school-age children also develop a sense of "team" as they play on sports teams and play or work in academic teams. This developing sense of team teaches children about competition, division of labor and putting aside personal goals for the good of the larger group.
Emotional	...can identify and label feelings, and can distinguish between wishes, actions, and motives.
Moral	...in the early school years, will do whatever is immediately advantageous in order to gain their own way. This behavior is labeled expedient. Values rules for their own sake and sees breaking rules as bad. Differences in standards or inconsistent rules are confusing. In later school years, the child wants to be like everyone else. They need this security that comes from conformity. Peers are very influential.

Needs and Tasks of School-Aged Children

Dimension of Development:	The Child Needs to:	The Child Should be Encouraged to:
Physical	Learn health, safety and physical skills.	Take full responsibility for self-care and participate in games and activities.
Cognitive	Learn basic academic skills, concepts of time,distance classification.	Achieve in school, participate in and develop hobbies, explore community and larger world.
Social	Learn how to relate to peers and to adults outside of family.	Participate in school activities and clubs, and learn to share, follow rules and take turns.
Emotional	Develop feelings of competency, learn own limitations, continue to work on appropriate expression of feelings.	Express feelings in appropriate ways, discuss feelings, learn to describe other's feelings.
Moral/Value	Learn rules and take responsibility for consequences.	Participate in games, religious instruction and other organizations; learn to understand reason behind rules and develop good citizenship skills.

Reaction to Separation

The school aged child may react to separation either by being very good, hoping if he is good enough he will be returned, or very bad, hoping you will get rid of him. He may be withdrawn, passive, and not eat. He may be aggressive and destructive. His schoolwork may drop. He may suffer nightmares or wet the bed. He may spend a lot of time telling you how good his natural parents are or what they will do when they catch up with you.

The foster parent must set up a consistent warm accepting atmosphere, but set limits. Recognition of the child's feelings as normal and natural, while insisting on appropriate limits to behavior and not interfering when it is not necessary will win out in the long run. Being readily available to talk and giving hugs and physical affection, if it is accepted, are important.

Issues around Discipline

Rules are very important at this age. Use of natural and logical consequences gives the child a feeling of control and helps build competency. Older children will want to know the reason. If you can't think of a good reason, rethink the rule.

Issues in Emotional Development

The young child is still the center of his universe. Feelings are often overwhelming and child often "acts" out feelings, screaming, hitting, biting, kicking. His major reason for controlling his behavior is fear of the consequences.

As a child begins to feel shame for behavior that group (or parents) disapprove, he or she begins to find other ways of expressing anger or fear, recognize group disapproval of inappropriate behavior and is sorry, ashamed, or fearful after an outburst. The child is likely to "displace" feelings and attempt to blame others for feelings.

Later a child begins to differentiate feelings and behavior and can postpone rewards or gratifications. He or she takes responsibility for his behavior. He or she works out strong feelings in ways that are not disruptive.

Issues in Moral Development

The young child desires approval of others, physical and material rewards can be replaced with attention, smiles, approval. He may develop anxiety about disapproval. Child still has little ability to generalize and develop rules that cover many different situations. His own imagination can be more real than reality.

As a child matures he begins to develop general rules. Although rules are reinforced by those around him, it is their esteem he seeks. Obedience to the rule is important rather than the end or the goal.

Around the time of adolescence, the child begins to internalize rules, develops empathy with others, feels badly if he doesn't live up to standards because of his own internal standards, becomes aware of the purpose of the rules and begins to weigh alternatives in terms of their consequences. This almost never happens before adolesence and sometimes occurs much later.

APPENDIX B

ARE WE RAISING CHILDREN OR ADULTS?

by: Patricia Ryan, Ph.D.

The Michigan Foster Parent Association decided to use their 4th annual educational conference to examine the way in which they are serving the children in their care. For if the nation's future rests in the hands of today's children, then we must ask in what way are we providing these children with the care and education they need to accept the task of guiding the nation during the early decades of its second two hundred years? Will they be able to maintain standards of morality and decency and yet allow maximum freedom for individuals?

Foster parents are able to take many children into their homes, children who are among the most neglected and hurt in our society, and contribute to the development of these children into useful adults. They can provide some insight for other parents and for adults who work with children as to what we should be doing if our children are to develop into the type of people to whom we will want to entrust the future of our nation.

The sub-title of the conference was "Children Are People: Building the Next 200 Years." This phrase raises some important questions:

1) Do we treat children as people?

2) Are we raising children or adults?

3) How do we want children to behave?

4) How do we work toward helping children develop into the kind of adults we want them to be?

Do We Treat Children as People?

Our society is often said to be child centered and certainly foster parents are strongly committed to loving not only their own children but all children who need them. Yet when we look at the way children are treated, we must ask do we really treat children in the way we are committed to treating human beings in our society? Much has been written on the failulre of our courts, schools, and social service agencies to protect the interest of the child rather than the interest and convenience of the adults who care for him. A good many children in our society are legally helpless if their needs for nurturing homes, permanent relationships, adequate educational opportunities, proper medical care, or a fair share of the community's resources are not met by the adults responsible for their well-being.

Foster parents are often frustrated at the failure of their attempts to help children and at the apparent callousness and disregard society shows for the children of greatest need. As we attempt to correct some of these wrongs, we must not fail to ask if we are guaranteeing the rights of children as people in our treatment of them in our homes.

We often insist that children meet our standards in all areas and do things our way. We are usually much more tolerant of our adult friends and their idiosyncrasies than we are of children. We do not insist that our friends eat foods they do not like, play outside rather than read, dress in the way we would dress, or keep their dresser drawers neat. Certainly as parenting people we must set limits on a child's behavior and cannot allow behavior that is dangerous, destructive or illegal. We also have the right to insist that children (and the adults with whom we associate) are not disruptive of the rights of others or discourteous. As we insist on specific behaviors, we must ask ourselves is it necessary to the well being of this child and those around him to demand this behavior or could I allow him more leeway in deciding what is most comfortable for him?

Along these same lines we often insist or expect that children will behave the same way all of the time: sleep the same number of hours every night, eat the same amount of food every day, act in the same way all of the time. We sometimes need more sleep than usual or aren't sleepy at bedtime. We all are hungrier some days than others, get into moods where we don't want to do some of the things we usually do or find that our tempers seem shorter than usual. Just as we expect for ourselves, and extend tolerance in these areas to other adults, we must accept variations in children and allow them to decide what they need to meet their needs within the limits of safety.

When we start examining the feelings of children, we find that we often go from one extreme to another. Sometimes we deny that their feelings are important assuming that they will soon get over it. At other times we assume they are extremely fragile and must be protected. Certainly young children fluctuate in their moods more quickly than do most adults and often seem to get completely bound up in the mood of the moment. When things are "good they are very, very good but when they are bad, they are horrid." The child who is able to laugh and enjoy an ice cream cone after a hurtful event, has not necessarily gotten over his hurt. Although temporarily forgotten, if it was severe, he still carries the scars inside and will need time to heal. With our adult friends we are careful not to hurt their feelings needlessly and sympathize with them when they have been hurt. With children we often assume that their feelings of hurt are inappropriate rather than asking if it was necessary for us to be hurtful.

Sometimes we assume that we must be hurtful to teach or control them. When we realize that they have been hurt, we try to distract them or tell them they will get over it rather than recognizing their hurt and giving them time to heal.

Sometimes we are so eager to protect a child's feelings that we either do not tell him things he has a right to know, deny him oportunities to meet challenges, or deny the importance of hurtful situations. Although we are trying to act in the child's interests, we are at best, denying his rights as a person to acknowledge his life situation and possibly setting up a situation in which he will no longer be able to trust adults as he learns that in their attempts to protect him, they have not been honest.

In discussing other ways in which we fail to treat children as people we found that we often deny them the basic rights of freedom of expression, privacy, private ownership, and protection from cruel and unusual punishment. We decided that if children are people they have a right to express their hopes and their anger, their fears and their dreams. When these expressions are inappropriate or distasteful to us we can help them find a better way of saying what they are trying to say but we should be very careful not to deny their right to feel or their right to express their feelings.

Although few of us would like to think of ourselves as snoops, prying into our neighbors' business, we feel a right or even obligation to snoop when it comes to our children. We enter their rooms without knocking, go through their drawers, and even read their mail. With little more subtley we insist on knowing "what they are thinking." If children are people, then as soon as they are capable of taking care of their physical needs, we should extend them the privacy to do so, and knock before entering closed doors. We should provide each child with some space where he can keep his treasures undisturbed and secret if he desires. We can intrude on these areas only if we have "due cause" to believe that our intrusion is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or those around him. We never have the right to insist that he share his feelings and only invite him to lie when we do so. If we think we can help him in dealing with those feelings, we can invite him to share with us but we have no right to insist.

In discussing privacy we touched upon the right of the child to determine who would use his possessions. We often tell a child he can't use other peoples' things without their permission and then insist he share his toys. We want our children to be unselfish but would not try to teach our adult frineds this virtue by demanding they allow us to use their private property. If the toys and other goodies are limited in a family, it is wise to spell our clearly what belongs to the family and must be fairly shared and what belongs to an individual and can be used only with his permission. We can point out the advantage of sharing and set a good example but when we have designated some property as belonging to a particular child then we must respect his right to control the use of that property.

One other area in which we treat children differently than we do adults and thus not as people is in the area of corporal punishment. Although we are prevented by law from physically assulting adults, who are nearer our size and strength, we often feel it is not only permissible but necessary to physically hurt children if we are to raise them properly. Without repeating the long arguments that spell out the pros and cons of spanking children, there are certain points we might consider:

1. Spanking children in foster care is prohibited by many agencies.

2. Spanking a child who has little reason to trust adults offers additional support to his belief that adults are hurtful.

3. Spanking a child offers him just retribution for his misdeeds, dissipating the guilt which would lead to changed behavior. He is taught only to be more careful not to get caught again in the future.

4. When spanking doesn't work to control a child's behavior, we often find ourselves caught in using greater and greater physical force in order to change his behavior.

All of the above considerations suggest that we all sometimes forget to treat children as people. Immediately we think: but children are different. They must be controlled. They must be taught. What if they grow up and continue to behave as they do now?

This raises the question for the next section: Are we raising children or adults?

Our primary aim with children was to help them grow to be strong, self-sustaining adults. When we think of the term adult, different adjectives pop into mind: independent, self-controlled, considerate, responsible, moral, and contributing. Many of the ways in which we do not treat children as people mentioned above are rationalized on the basis that children are incapable of behaving as adults and taking responsibility for their own behavior. Do you teach children self-control by punishing them so that they base their behavior on the fear of being caught? Do you teach children to be responsible by doing everything for them or by insisting they follow your rules? Do you teach children to be moral by denying their rights as people or expecting very little of them? Do you teach children the joy of contributing by expecting them to do what you say and only what you say?

It doesn't always seem sensible to think of children as adults. A baby cannot provide for his most basic needs without a caring adult. A five year old cannot drive a car. A ten year old does not have the same self-control as an adult. It is the very dependency of children and our own feelings or responsibility to their well being that often leads us to disregard their rights, on the one hand, and to allow them to get away with all kinds of nonsense on the other.

If we are truly in the business of raising children to be adults, we must determine the stage of development they are at and know what we can expect of them at that stage. With this knowledge we can set limits on their behavior and allow them the freedom to determined their own behavior within these limits. This is a very difficult job. It is so easy to demand too much or too little. When we catch a child stealing we wonder if he will grow up to be a criminal. When we see a child miss a treat because of his carelessness, we often try to soften the blow.

If we are to be successful in raising adults, we must not expect more of a child than he is capable of doing but we should not reward immature behavior. We should not punish a child for behavior that is consistent with his stage of development but we should allow him to experience all but the more serious consequences of that behavior. We do not have to fear that current disapproved behavior will continue or become more exaggerated in the adult but we should explain the consequences of undesirable behavior and stop dangerous or illegal behavior.

How Do We Want Children To Behave?

Each family has its own standards of behavior but there are certain kinds of behavior we can agree are desirable for children. As we discuss these areas we can ask ourselves, "How important is it really that my child meet my standards in this area?" Am I expecting more than he is capable of delivering? Am I creating a situation that encourages him to behave the way I want or expect him to behave? Are these behaviors I think are important for him when he is an adult?

Obedience: He is an obedient child, she is a good girl, are often the highest compliments we can pay a child. We are not often called upon to compliment adults by calling them obedient. We are more likely to say that an adult is thoughtful of others and carries out his or her responsibilities. We only think of an adult as obedient in terms of obeying rules that are set for the convenience of all. If this is what we mean by an obedient child then we want to help every child be "obedient."

More often we mean that a child should be obedient by obeying adult rules set for the convenience of the adults rather than the convenience of all including children. The good child is one who easily complies with the adults demands made upon him and who is not disruptive of adult activities. The super-good child is often too fearful of his own feelings and the reactions of those around him to take any independent action. If we were to be successful in raising obedient adults we would have a nation of people who always followed the rules and were afraid to deviate even when it was necessary. They would be incapable of devising new behaviors when the rules did not apply.

In helping our children grow, let us teach them consideration for others and responsibility rather than obedience.

Politeness: The rules of polite behavior make it easier to get along with other people by suggesting appropriate behavior and outlawing behavior that would be discomforting to others. Many of the traditional rules of etiquette no longer hold but some good manners never go out of style. When we teach our children good manners on the basis of making it easier for them to be comfortable with people and making it easier for people to be comfortable with them, we are building a basis for smoothing their way to adult relationships. If we insist that they follow old fashioned behavioral rules, expecially those that are only demanded of children, at best we are wasting our energy and possibly teaching them that courtesy is nonsense.

Cleanliness: Many of us feel disgust at examples of filth and dirt. We argue that not maintaining standards of cleanliness is unattractive, unhealthy, and immoral. Daily bath, neat rooms, and clean clothes are things that many children find unimportant. If we think carefully about our standards in these areas, we have to admit that we are seldom faced with a child who is dirty to a point where it is likely to make him ill or whose room is really a health hazard to himself or to his family. Cleanliness then becomes a social necessity. People will become uncomfortable around you, react negatively or avoid you if they sense you have not met their standards. This line of thinking teaches a child a little about the social reality in which he must live rather than insisting he follow our set rules.

Studiousness: The chances adults in our society are self-supporting and contributing members are closely bound to the amount of education they were able to obtain. Although we all know exceptions to this rule, college graduates who do nothing, grade school drop outs who have accomplished much, encouraging our children to do well in school increases their chances of being happy, productive adults. However, telling a child to do better or study more is seldom an effective way of increasing his school achievements. A more productive way of helping the child who is not doing well in school is to find out why. The child's teacher, the school social worker, the helping teacher, and perhaps a private therapist can work with the parent to determine the child's potential and the reasons for his failure. With this information these same people can help formulate a plan to improve his performance and help him develop career plans in line with his capabilities.

Honesty: This is one area where we can all agree. We do not want to encourage dishonesty in children especially if this leads them to be dishonest adults. Yet the truth is not always easily defined. Property rights are not always clearly determined. Some forms of dishonesty are socially acceptable: the courteous excuse, the little white lie. Absolute honesty, when it is needlessly hurtful, is not always the best policy. In asking the children be honest we should ask: Are they being dishonest or do they see things differently? Will they be punished for their honesty? Do they have ways other than stealing to provide for their needs? Am I asking more from them in this area than I would of my adult friends?

Maturity: All along we have been saying that it might be better to try to raise adults rather than children. At this point we might stop and ask how are children different? How are children different from their age mates? None of us would want to return to the time when small children were treated as adults, with adult expectations as to their behavior and understanding, and adult punishments when they broke the law.

Children do not have the physical capacity for certain behaviors, their emotional view of the world is different, and their knowledge of appropriate behaviors and alternatives is limited. Taking these factors into consideration, we can see children as developing in stages. At each stage their abilities to function come closer to what we would expect from adults. Thus as parents we are able to reward children for mature behavior while tolerating, but not rewarding, immature behavior. Thus demanding more mature ways of behaving then a child is capable of is unjust.

Recognition that individual children develop at different rates and the conviction that the slow child may reach eventual maturity helps us help the child. Often our fears become ridiculous when examined closely. A five year old who wets his pants will probably stop before high school. A child who bites his playmates must be stopped now, but he probably will not grow into an adult biter.

Viewing the child's development in stages helps us to see our job as helping to move the child to the next level of development from where he is at now, rather than insisting he act his age or meet our standards.

Raising Adults

How do we go about raising children to be adults? First by providing them a model of the kind of adult we want them to be.

We can not expect children to pay any attention if we insist "they do as we say, not as we do." By being courteous we teach children manners. By respecting their rights, we teach them to respect the rights of others. By being honest with them and with others we teach them to be honest. The way we act with our spouse and with them will set the pattern for when they marry and become parents. Most importantly we teach our children how to treat them. It is very difficult for any person who doesn't feel worthwhile to enter into human relationships. He can not believe that others find him worthwhile, capable, or lovable if he has not come to believe he is these things.

A second way of helping children develop into adults is to let them experience the consequences of their behavior. If they are slow in the morning, they will be late for school. If they don't share, others will not play with them. If they don't eat, they get hungry. Of course this rule can not be followed if the consequences are dangerous to the child or others. In these cases, we have to make rules and spell out the consequences we will provide if the rule is broken. If you ride your bike in the street, you can not ride it again for a week.

Explaining to children the reason for the rule, the behavior expected or forbidden, and the consequences often makes it easier for all. Whenever possible, children should be involved in figuring out why they must follow the rule and the consequences for breaking it. Asking what they think will be an appropriate consequence often helps them gain greater understanding and develop a sense of fairness. When we can not think of a good reason for a rule, we should rethink the need for that rule.

Too many rules force us as parents to play policemen. We nag at a child until he stops listening to us. We are either letting the child get away with breaking a minor rule or spending all of our time enforcing consequences. It is important that every parent evaluate all of the rules and determine which are really important. Whenever possible we should do away with rules and leave the child free to make his own decisions and learn from the consequences. This doesn't leave us disinvolved for we still have an obligation to discuss with the child his alternatives in a situation and the possible consequences. We simply change our role from decision maker for the child to one of counselor.

We still retain the responsibility of limiting the child's behavior whenever it is potentially dangerous to himself or others, destructive, or illegal. The child must be physically stopped. When a family finds they cannot control a child's behavior in these areas, they should seek outside help. It does not mean that the family is inadequate or a failure. It doesn't mean that the child is necessarily sick or that the family is giving up on him. He cannot be allowed to hurt himself or others and the family who seeks help is carrying out their responsibility to him.

APPENDIX C

NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Behavior	Natural Consequences	Logical Consequences
Refusal to Eat	hunger	no snacks
Refusal to Go to Bed	sleepy next day	go to bed 1/2 hour earlier next time
Fighting	get hurt - not play together by choice	parent separates and won't allow to play together for 15 minutes
Not Sharing Toys	other children won't share with them	separating children
Failure to Put Things Away	can't find or are broken, messy, etc.	can't use until the next day
Stealing	trouble with others guilt,fears trouble with law	pay back return apologize
Setting Fires	burn self or property	no campfire privileges no access to matches
Smoking Pot	high, trouble with school or law	keep from situations where pot is available grounding for certain times

*Taken from: E.J. McFadden. Emotional Development. Ypsilanti: Eastern Michgian University, 1984.

APPENDIX D

REWARDS

Rewards are an important way to help children learn to behave appropriately. Although children will respond to both punishment and rewards (negative and positive consequences of behavior), punishment often makes a child angry and lowers his self-esteem. The child often focuses his anger and attention on the adult and loses sight of the inappropriate behavior that led to the punishment. Rewards, on the other hand, make a child feel good and build his self-esteem. Rewarding good behavior teaches a child that appropriate behavior brings good things and makes him feel good.

Many adults are reluctant to use rewards. They feel that children should want to do the right thing or fear that if they reward a child too frequently, the child will only do things to get a reward; that he won't do what is appropriate unless he knows he will be rewarded. Other people feel that it is wrong to reward a child for doing what is expected and that this constitutes a bribe.

What is the difference between a reward and a bribe?

1) We reward people for doing what they should and bribe them for doing what they shouldn't. If a child finds that he can usually get things he wants if he makes enough fuss, we are teaching him to misbehave in order to get what he wants. This constitutes a bribe to stop the annoying behavior. Rewarding good behavior is not a bribe.

Why do children need rewards?

From what we have learned about development, we know that small children and infants are most impressed with material rewards. As we develop into responsible adults, we are able to generate our own rewards. Sometimes we just feel good knowing that we have done something that is unpleasant but important. However, we also appreciate it when we receive rewards from other people. Certainly those of us who work for pay, expect our paychecks even if we enjoy our work and find it satisfying. When people reward us through compliments or give us gifts, it lets us know our efforts are appreciated.

Young children, and children of any age who have not internalized values, are not ready to experience their own satisfaction from doing what is right. They need someone to provide the rewards from the outside. As they continue to behave appropriately or as they successfully substitute acceptable behaviors for unacceptable behaviors, the appropriate behaviors will become easier and easier. They will need fewer rewards to continue the desired behavior.

How do we determine appropriate rewards?

It is important that we apply the same principles to the use of rewards as we do for other types of consequences (See Appendix G). Rewards can be thought of as natural, logical or artificial consequences of behavior. When the reward is the natural consequence of a behavior, we as parents don't have to do anything. Sometimes we might point out to a child the positive consequences of his behavior that he might not realize. It feels good when we share our toys with others, and they in turn, share with us.

Unfortunately, from the adult point of view, children do not always place the same value on things that we do. Consequently, they often do not experience the same rewards as we do. For instance, very few children think that clean rooms are important and they often find very little satisfaction in having a nice, neat room. In such situations, we must provide the reward. In time they may come to recognize and appreciate the natural consequences of certain behavior.

We should try to use logical rewards when natural rewards are not effective. If we can not think of a logical reward, then we can fall back on artificial rewards.

As with other types of consequences, rewards should be appropriate to the child's stage of development and appropriate to the behavior expected. Generally speaking, frequent small rewards are more effective than a few large rewards. As the child matures, we can help him develop a schedule of saving up small rewards for larger ones. But even with a large reward, it is helpful to keep track of small increments so that the child is reminded of the way in which he is earning what he wants.

Rewards are also most effective when established in cooperation with the child. Discussing possible rewards provides an opportunity to explain why the desired behavior is important and why we want the child to behave this way. It allows us to learn why the child is difficult at this time. We can also link priveleges of the next stage of development with responsibilities of that stage so that a child is motivated to move on.

Remember rewards include smiles, hugs and praise as well as things and privileges. If a child has not learned to respond to praise, we may start out using material rewards combined with praise. Over time, the child may come to value our esteem and no longer need the material rewards.

USING REWARDS

Undesired Behavior	Specific Desired Behavior	Application of Reward	Possible Reward
tardy to school	arrive on time	teacher rewards or parent rewards after school	a special snack after school
messy room	put away clothes and toys	instruct, check and reward as soon as child gets up and performs task	watch cartoon before school
sloppy appearance	bathe and lay out clean clothes	instruct, monitor reward immediately	story or extra time before lights out
swearing,	use of substitute phrase to express feeling "I feel angry"	reward child each time substitute phrase is used, or each day that child does not swear	a penney or a nickle
whining	uses pleasant tone of voice	catch child doing something right, reward pleasant tone of voice immediately	praise points on chart

Source: E.J. McFadden. Emotional Development. Ypsilanti: Eastern Michigan University, 1984.

APPENDIX E

SPECIAL SCHOOL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Each school system in Michigan, along with other states, has special services available within the system to aid children with special needs. In this session we will examine the programs offered to students with special needs as well as support services available to those students and all other students within the system.

Before beginning, it should be noted that according to Michigan Public Law 198, schools must provide educational programming for all children ages 0-25 who have been identified as having physical, vision, hearing, mental, or emotional impairments, speech and language problems or learning disabilities. These impairments are identified by the Individualized Educational Planning Committee (I.E.P.C.). Federal Law 94-142 mandates that all states provide individualized educational programming for all handicapped children at no cost to parents, within the school system if possible, in the least restricting environment possible. If it is not possible to provide services within the school system, the school must contract with other agencies to provide services.

What programs may be provided for special need children?

1. Programs for the Hearing Impaired
2. Programs for the Visually Impaired
3. Programs for the Physically or Otherwise Health Impaired
4. Programs for the Educable Mentally Impaired
5. Programs for the Trainable Mentally Impaired
6. Programs for the Severely Mentally Impaired
7. Programs for the Emotionally Impaired
8. Programs for the Learning Disabled
9. Programs for the Speech and Language Impaired
10. Programs for the Severely Multiply Impaired
11. Preprimary Impaired

Who is eligible for the programs and what services are offered?

Hearing Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon evaluation by an audiologist and/or an otolaryngologist and Individual Education Planning Placement Committee approval that the child meets Hearing Impaired requirements of the State Board of Education.

2. Services include audiological consultation and auditory-oral communications skill and language training, special classrooms, and referral to Michigan School for the Deaf, if necessary.

Visually Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon evaluation by an ophtamologist or equivalent and approval of the I.E.P.C. that the child meets Visually Impaired definition of the State Board of Education.

2. Service would include special classrooms, having regular educational curriculum plus instruction in orientation and mobility, communications skill development, and prevocational and job experience. Referral to Michigan School for the Blind may also occur if appropriate.

Physically and Otherwise Health Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon the evaluation of a neurologist, pediatrician, orthopedic surgeon, or internists and the approval of the I.E.P.C. that the child meets Physically Impaired definition of the State Board of Education.

2. Services include occupational and physical therapy, special classrooms, and/or support curriculum for the regular classroom when needed.

Educable Mentally Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon the evaluation of a school psychologist, certified psychologist, or certified consulting psychologist, and I.E.P.C. approval that the child meets the State Board of Education definition of Educable Mentally Impaired.

2. Services include pre-school through high school educational assistance. This may be in the form of a special classroom and/or providing integration and curricular assistance in a regular classroom if appropriate. Support services of the school social worker are often included in the plan.

Trainable Mentally Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon the evaluation of a school psychologist, certified phschologist, or certified consulting psychologist, and approval of the I.E.P.C. that the child meets the State Board of Education requirements for the Trainable Mentally Impaired.

2. Services are provided by the speech and language therapist, physical and occupational therapist, physical education specialist, special education teachers, school psychologist and the school social worker. These services are aimed at helping the child in the infant development school program to develop social skills, language skills, hygiene, toileting and other self-help skills and academic skills as appropriate.

Severely Mentally Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon evaluation of a school psychologist, certified psychologist, or certified consulting psychologist, and I.E.P.C. approval that the child meets the State Board of Education definition of Severely Mentally Impaired.

2. Services are similar to those for Trainable Mentally Impaired.

Emotionally Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon evaluation of a school psychologist and school social worker, certified psychologist, or certified consulting psychologist and I.E.P.C. approval that the child meets the State Board of Education definition of Emotionally Impaired.

2. Children with social and emotional problems may be served in a special classroom program and/or consultation and curriculum support services may be offered to the child in a regular classroom setting if appropriate. Support services often include those of the school social worker.

Learning Disabled

1. Eligibility is based upon the evaluation of a school psychologist, certified psychologist, or cerfitied consulting psychologists or a neurologist, or an equivalent, and I.E.P.C. approval that the child meets the State Board of Education definition of Learning Disabled.

2. Services include special classrooms, resource rooms, and regular classroom support services of the learning disabilities consultant.

Speech and Language Impairment

1. Eligibility is based upon the certification of the impairment by an approved teacher of the Speech and Language Impaired. Approval from the I.E.P.C. is not needed.

2. Services include speech and language evaluation and therapy for students with abnormalities in speech, voice, and language developments.

Severely Multiply Impaired

1. Eligibility is based upon previous medical records, any educational history, evaluation by a neurologist, orthopedic surgeon, opthomologist, audiologist or equivalent, and I.E.P.C. approval that the child meets with the State Board of Education definition of a Severely Multiply Impaired child.

2. Services are similar to those of Trainable Mentally Impaired with additional services possibly from the hearing and vision specialists, learning disability consultant, teacher of the Emotionally Impaired and regular classroom teacher when appropriate.

Homebound

1. Eligibility is based upon certification by a licensed physician that the child has severe physical or other health impairment preventing school attendance.

2. Instruction services are provided in the home by the homebound teacher who must be in the home a minimum of two hours per week.

Hospitalized

1. Eligibility is based upon the child's inability to attend school because of hospitalization.

2. The homebound teacher instructs the youngster in the hospital and instruction must occur a minimum of two hours per week.

Before entering many of the above services, the Individualized Educational Planning Committee must give approval. Who makes up this committee?

Teachers, consultants, administrators, psychologists, social workers, other members of multidisciplinary evaluation team, parents or legal guardians of the child, and others who may possess significant information on the child.

What does the committee do?
The committee decides whether or not the student is eligible for special education services and makes recommendations as to the specific program and services to be provided and individualized educational program to be provided.

Are foster parents condsidered part of such a committee?
No, there is no legal requirement that the foster parent must be included in or invited to the meeting or included in its proceedings.

Should foster parents attend these meetings?

Yes, if you are aware of the meeting you should contact the Director of Special Education and ask to attend. You have valuable input. But remember, the interpretation of the law varies from school district to school district. Some schools may encourage your attendance, while others may not.

Do foster parents have voting rights in such a meeting?

Though this is also open to interpretation, usually you will not have voting rights. Your major impact will be through your "expert" input.

What if we do not agree with the outcome of the Educational Planning and Placement Committee meeting? Do we have the right to initiate an appeal?

This is open to the interpretation of the school district. If you encounter problems, contact your foster care agency for help.

What support services does the school system provide?

1. School Psychologist

2. School Social Worker

3. Speech and Language Therapist

4. Learning Disabilities Consultant

5. Physical and Occupational Therapist

What services could the School Psychologist offer?

1. The School Psychologist administers and interprets various tests designed to diagnose and identify learning problems and emotional problems in children.

2. The School Psychologist then prepares a written psychological report and provides information to parents as well as school staff. This information includes both test results and recommendations on how to aid the youngster in remediating or compensating for the difficulty.

What service does the School Social Worker provide for the child?

1. The School Social Worker provides consultation to both parents and school personnel on how to aid the child who is having problems with his or her emotional adjustment and how to aid the child who is having difficulties in his or her interactions with others. The problems may be occurring at home, at school, after school, etc.

2. The School Social Worker also provides direct therapy to children when necessary.

3. The School Social Worker serves as a liaison between the home, the school, and other community agencies. The School Social Worker uses this liaison role to promote and improve understanding of the child, the child's needs, and types of service to be provided.

What services does the Speech and Language Therapist provide for the child?

1. The speech and language therapist provides speech and language therapy to pupils referred because of abnormalities of speech, voice, and language development.

2. On the basis of the diagnosis, the speech and language therapist meets periodically with student develop and use new speech and language patterns.

3. The speech and language therapist also provides consultation to parents on how they can aid and support appropriate speech and language development.

What are the services provided by the Learning Disabilities Consultant?

1. The learning disabilites consultant services include diagnosing, writing prescriptive programs, tutoring, screening, referring and supply specialized materials and planning for children who require aid outside of their classroom.

2. They serve as resource persons for new materials and techniques appropriate to the learning disabled child's needs.

3. They consult with parents and teachers about educational matters, providing information regarding materials, current trends, and media available.

4. They serve as liaison persons with the learning disabilities center.

5. They may coordinate volunteers who provide learning disabled students with extra help in tutoring.

What do Physical Therapists do?

1. They treat musculoskeletal and/or neurological problems, using physical means.

2. Treatment is primarily in the form of therapeutic exercise, and gait training. This therapy and training has as its goal enhancing the students' mobility, performance, and physical participation in daily living.

What do Occupational Therapists do?

The occupational therapists evaluate, develop and implement plans:

1. To promote independence in activities of daily living such as toileting, feeding, dressing, and personal hygiene.

2. To reduce or compensate for perceptual handicaps.

3. To increase sensory-motor integration, that is to increase the ability to integrate the input of information from your senses and the output of motor activities.

4. To increase fine motor skills such as cutting, tracing, lacing, writing, and catching a ball.

5. To become more proficient in the use of adaptive equipment such as crutches, braces, artificial limbs, etc.

Request brochures and handbooks describing special education in your state, i.e. "The Special Education Process in Michigan: A Handbook for Parents". Often your local department of special education will have this information.

Many people worry that diagnosing a child for special educational services is labeling the child and may have negative consequences for the child. This can be the case, but it is a necessary risk as children can not receive necessary services without a diagnosis. Parents care assure that the emphasis of the diagnosis is on the plan for helping a child grow and not on what caused the condition.

Sometimes special education services are provided in a seprate school building or in a separate classroom. Federal legislation supports the integration of the child into the regular classroom whenever possible. Segregation should always be the last resort and only used if there is no other possible way to provide the services and only to the extent necessary. Whenever possible, children should spend the greatest part of the day in the regular classroom.

*The information in this section was taken from a typical local Michigan brochure, "Special Education Programs Offered By the School District of the City of Holland, 1985."

APPENDIX F

SELF-CONCEPT

Discipling Teaches Self-Control

One way to encourage a positive self-concept is to learn self-control. Foster parents have often asked how they can teach children self-control while the child is being disciplined. As they look at their discipline methods, they must ask if they are teaching their child adequate techniques for self-control so that the child will be able to control himself (internal control) when the parents are not available or not able to control the child. They must also ask if their discipline is for their own benefit or for the child's.

Foster parents often discipline children for inadequately accomplishing tasks or for failure to behave acceptably. What steps can foster parents take to encourage the child to learn self control to accomplish tasks? These tasks may include chores around the house, academic tasks, etc.

1. Choose tasks that the child can successfully complete.

2. For more difficult tasks such as making beds, break the task down into achievable subtasks. Such as, "First smooth the bottom sheet then pull up the top sheet, now smooth the top sheet."

3. If the child brings home a spelling paper he did poorly on, count the number of words spelled correctly. "You got 7 out of 15 correct, next time maybe you can get 8 correct."

4. Remind the child that though he failed on this chore or task, there are many other tasks that he succeeds in.

5. The child must realize that he is responsible for this specific failure, it was no one else's fault. Then the child must be encouraged to look for methods and ways he can succeed in the task next time.

What steps can the foster parent take to help the child learn self-control while disciplining her negative behavior?

1. If you saw or know what negative behavior occurred, tell the child what you saw or heard that she did.

2. Ask the child to assess whether her behavior was helpful to herself or others. Ask the child to explain the possible consequences of her behavior: The principal or teacher might punish the child; the child may be injured if he continues this behavior; her bicycle might be stolen if left outside. Encourage the child to realistically assess the behavior.

3. Ask the child to suggest and describe alternative behaviors that would have been helpful which have positive consequences. (This alternative should be achievable, contain a time limit, and include a specific assessment of positive behaviors. "Instead of fighting with Jimmy, I will play with Mary and Bill for the next two weeks and stay away from Jimmy.") When you have reached an agreeemnt on an alternative, write the alternative on a piece of paper and have your the child to sign it. Give the child a copy and have her report to you on how he is doing on this alternative.

4. At the end of the time period specified in the agreement, have the child assess her behavior. Did she keep the agreement? What caused problems? How did she handle these problems? What other alternative solutions might there be?

5. Praise the child and reward her for successful performance.

6. Encourage the child to praise herself for her positive performance.

7. Avoid encouraging the child to make excuses.

8. Avoid physical punishment. This does not help the child internalize control Instead, it makes the child angry, hostile and frightened. It teaches the child to control through force and be abusive.

When do foster parents give a child control of the situation, and when do they keep control themselves?

Steps to Self-Concept Development*

How can the foster parents aid children in developing a positive self-concept?

1. Model self-praising behavior. Say in front of the child, "I did a good job at this." Do this in an attempt to help the child learn to praise himself. Praise your work, then go on to praise yourself (personal qualities). Tell your foster child you are trying to help him gain a better self-concept. Praise yourself for attitudes, feelings and ideas. Praise yourself for choices made. Praise yourself for results achieved. Praise yourself for methods used to achieve results. And praise yourself for the reactions you receive from others. Ask your child to praise himself in a similar way.

2. Help children make realistic demands upon themselves.
    a. Help them accurately evaluate their performance. Often they feel they performed horribly when they performed very acceptably.

   b. Help them to be realistic about what their performance means. Too many foster children, coming in second in a race means they have failed because they did not win. In fact, they have run faster than many others.
   c. Help children to evaluate true failure as failure in a single performance area at one time from which something can be learned. Children often generalize saying, "I'm a failure, I can't do anything right."
   d. Help children to know and understand that they do not have to be perfect.
   e. Help children compare their present performance to past accomplishments.
   f. When you praise children for performance, be specific. Explain to the child exactly what performance you are praising and what exactly he did that was worthy of praise.

3. Teach the child to set realistic goals. If the goal is too low, the child does not feel a sense of accomplishment. If the goal is too high, the child sees herself as a failure for not achieving that goal.
   a. Goals must be set by the child.
   b. Goals must be individualized. That is, the goals of one child may differ significantly from the goals of another.
   c. Goals must be attainable. Therefore, setting goals that are only slightly higher than past performance is recommended.
   d. Children must have end goals (the performance they ultimately want to achieve) and intermediate goals (small steps that will move them from their present level of performance to that end goal).

4. Children must be taught to praise themselves. We can begin by praising them and then encouraging them to praise the natural family or the foster family. The next step is for the child to praise himself and to give himself encouragement. Self-praise can be elicited by skillful questions such as, "Don't you think you did a good job on that paper?" "Don't you think you've been a good friend to Steve?" When the child does praise himself, give him support and reinforcement.

5. Teach children to praise others. When children feel good about themselves, and give self-praise, they feel good about others and give them praise. You can model this behavior by praising others. Praise of others can also be elicited from the child by asking questions such as "Didn't Mary make an attractive boat?" "Doesn't Bill play well with other children?" "Sue is a very kind child, isn't she?"

Foster parents should be cautioned against attempting to aid the child in praising others before the child has mastered the previous steps. If the child has not mastered the other steps, he may not have developed a positive self-concept. In this case, if the child is encouraged to praise others, he may feel he must praise them because they are better or more worthwhile than he. These feelings might perpetuate a negative self-concept.

The format and many of the ideas in the following situations were adapted from the following book: Felker, D. W., Building Positive Self-Concepts. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1974.

APPENDIX G

COMMUNITY SERVICES AVAILABLE TO FOSTER FAMILIES

The following agencies provide services to meet the needs of foster children and foster families.

1. Department of Social Services

2. Mental Health Clinics

3. Court social services staffs

4. Private counseling agencies

5. Self-help groups and advocacy groups

6. Adult education classes

7. Special classes or camps for children

What services to the foster child might be offered by specific agencies?

Child and Family Service Agencies (sectarian and non-sectarian)

1. Counseling and therapy
2. Volunteers and respite care
3. Self help groups and classes
4. Referrals

Department of Social Services

1. Financial assistance, medicaid

2. Homemaker and other services

3. Referrals

Juvenile Court

1. Counseling

2. Help with truant or delinquent children

3. Custodial debates

4.

Protective Services

1. Counseling

2. Investigation of complaints

Societies or associations for specific handicaps

such as epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, mental retardation, blindness, hearing and speech disabilities. Generally provide:

1. Information about nature of handicap and what it means to child
2. Services available in community
3. Base for advocacy and change

Municipal Recreation Departments

1. Camps and recreation programs
2. Hobby groups

Child Guidance Clinics and Community Mental Health Clinics

1. Group therapy
2. Individual therapy
3. Referrals
4. Testing and diagnosis
5. Suicide prevention, substance abuse counseling
6. Crises services

County Health Department

1. Immunization, sodium floride treatments

2. Help with nutrition

3. List of doctors or dentists

4. Classes, counseling and education programs

5. Referrals

6. Books and pamphlets

7. Vision and hearing screening

8. Chronic disease services, nursing services, etc.

9.

Scouts, Campfire, Church, Clubs

Hobbies, skills

Opportunity for peer interaction

What parks, nature trails, etc., in your community are available for use by school age children, Do these facilities offer supervision? What services are available at each facility?

What field trips are available in your area?

What special programs do your area ministers and churches have for school age children? What are the eligibility requirements for the program?

APPENDIX H

KEEPING THE BED DRY

Bedwetting and the Foster Child

Workshop Presented at the Michigan Foster Parent Association
3rd Annual Education Conference by

Patricia Ryan, Ph.D.
Institute for the Study of Children and Families
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan

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Goal: The purpose of this workshop was to help foster parents handle bedwetting and interpret the reasons why a child might be unable to remain dry at night.

Why does bedwetting bother foster parents?

- They feel inadequate, frustrated, angry.
- They worry as to why it happens.
- They fear that they have been bad parents at toilet training, and teaching bladder and bowel control are emphasized by our society as the job of the parents.
- They fear the child has a physical or psychological problem.
- They fear the child is developing bad character traits or habits - lack of self-control, laziness, rebelliousness, or dirtiness.
- They fear other children will tease the child.
- They find it messy, dirty, disgraceful.
- They find it a lot of work and destructive to bedding, matresses, etc.

Why do children wet the bed?

- Because they are overtired and do not wake up at the urge to urinate.
- Because their bladders are too small.
- Because they do not void completely during the day.
- Because they are afraid of the dark, afraid to get out of bed, or have been punished for getting up in the middle of the night.
- Because they are are afraid of the bathroom or using the big toilet by themselves.
- Because they drink too much before going to bed.
- Because they are over-tense and wet as they relax during sleep.

- Because they are angry and use bedwetting as a way to punish.
- Because they have never been taught to get up and find the toilet at night.
- Because they want attention.
- Very occassionally, because they have a physical deformity or infection (if this is the case, they usually have daytime symptoms as well).

What are the long range consequences?

Since many children wet the bed until adolescence without serious consequence, the long range consequences for the child do not result from bedwetting _per se_, but from the way the child is treated. He comes to be embarassed, afraid to stay overnight away from home, distrustful of people, and to feel he is bad, unworthy, and lacking in the ability to control himself. In most cases, wetting the bed is beyond the control of the child but he will outgrow it. There are really no long range consequences.

What to do (or try) for the short run?

- Cut down on liquids.
- Increase liquids and amount of time between daytime toileting.
- Wake child up in the middle of night and take him the toilet.
- Try going under assumption that he hasn't been trained and start training from the beginning.
- Provide child with potty in his room.
- Provide child with nightlight.
- Try commercial gadgets that wake child when wet.
- Teach child to change bed by himself.
- Remember that punishment, even if successful will probably be more detrimental to the child than bedwetting.

Remember, since wetting the bed is not under the child's conscious control, we do not need to think in terms of rewards and punishments.

APPENDIX I

EXAMPLES OF FORMS WHICH MAY HELP FOSTER PARENTS

FORM 1

CHILD INFORMATION MONTHLY REPORT OUTLINE

All of the following topics should be discussed with the worker at the first visit after a child is placed. After that, the topics starred should be reviewed and any changes, progress or problems in other areas discussed.

Be sure to include the child's strong points and gains as well as difficulties and problems. Meetings with professionals should be listed on the Planning Sheet which follows.

I. Physical Progress

*1. Any illness, medication or medical or dental visits.

*2. Weight gain, loss, growth, new physical skills or development.

II. School, Learning and Education

*1. School visits or reports from school.

2. Child's relationship with school personnel, teachers, counselors.

3. Child's relationship with schoolmates, fighting, visiting homes, etc.

4. Gains or problems in schoolwork.

5. Child's progress in talking, coloring, reading, etc.

6. Special attention, special education, tutoring and progress in these areas.

7. Child's general attitude toward school.

*8. Participation in special programs, honors, etc.

III. Foster Family Relationships

1. Feelings and behavior with foster mother.
2. Feelings and behavior with foster father.
3. Feelings and behavior with other children in the home.
4. Chores and self-care child is able to accomplish: dressing, toileting, setting the table, etc.

IV. Relationships with Natural Family

*1. Separation symptoms.

*2. Calls or visits.

*3. Child's reaction to calls or visits.

*4. Child's conversation about natural family.

V. Social Relationships

1. How does the child relate to adults, neighbors, other children?
2. Does the child have close friends, dates, or belong to neighborhood clubs, Boy Scouts, etc.?

VI. Emotional Development

1. Is the child able to express feelings appropriately? How does he react when he is angry, happy, sad?
2. Is the child able to discuss his feelings with others?
3. How does the child express affection?

VII. Value and Moral Development

1. Is the child receiving religious training?
2. Does the child obey rules, understand reason behind rules.

VIII. Special Problems

*1. Is the child undergoing physical or psychological therapy? What is happening in this area?

*2. Is the child displaying any unusual or worrisome behavior? What? When? How often? How is it being handled?

IX. Planning

*1. What were the specific goals established last month? What progress has been made toward the foster family and child achieving this goal?

*2. What are the specific goals for the coming month? How will we attempt to accomplish these?

*These topics should be reviewed at every meeting.

FORM 2

PLANNING SHEET

PLANNING SHEET FOR ______________________
(date)

Child's Name: ______________________

Child's Birthdate: ______________________

Foster Parents: ______________________

Goals to be accomplished during the coming six months (be specific):

1.

2.

3.

4.

Plans for moving toward these goals during the next month:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Meetings with Professionals During Month

Date	Person and Job	Result

Visits, Calls and Contacts with Natural Family During Month

Date	Person	Type of Contact	Child's Reaction

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

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Fahlberg, V. Helping Children When They Must Move. Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Department of Social Services, 1979.

Felker, E. Raising Other People's Kids. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981.

Ginnot, H. Between Parent and Child. New York: McMillan, 1965.

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Jewett, C. Adopting Older Children. Harvard, Massachusetts: Harvard Common Press, 1978.

Minton, L. Growing Into Adolescence: A Sensible Guide for Parents 11 to 14. New York: Parents Magazine Press, 1972.

Satir, V. Peoplemaking. Palo Alto: California: Science Behavior Books, 1972.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR INSTRUCTORS

Workers will also find many of the suggested readings for foster parents to be useful and relevant.

Aust, P. "Using the Life Story Book in the Treatment of Children in Placement," Child Welfare, 9:1981, 535-559.

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Ishisaka, H. "American Indians and Foster Care: Cultural Factors and Separation," Child Welfare. 5:1978: 299-307.

Ladner, Joyce. Mixed Families. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1978.

McGoldrick, M., J. Pearce and J. Giordano. Ethnicity and Family Therapy. New York: Guilford Press, 1982.

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Redick, L.T. and B. Wood. "Cross-Cultural Problems for Southeast Asian Refugee Minors," Child Welfare. 6:1982, 365-373.

Stehno, S. "Differential Treatment of Minority Children in Service Systems," Social Work, 1:1982 39-45.

Wheeler, C. Where Am I Going? Making A Life Story Book. Juneau: Winking Owl Press, 1978.

Wilson, A. The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child. New York: Africana Research Publishers, 1978.